

THE LIVING AGE.

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PART IX.—CHAPTER XXVIII.

VINCENT put out his hand to seize upon the strange woman who confronted him with a calmness much more confounding than any agitation. But her quick eye divined his purpose. She made the slightest movement aside, extended her own, and had shaken hands with him in his utter surprise before he knew what he was doing. The touch bewildered his faculties, but did not move him from the impulse, which was too real to yield to anything. He took the door from her hand, closed it, placed himself against it. "You are my prisoner," said Vincent. He could not say any more, but gazed at her with blank eyes of determination. He was no longer accessible to reason, pity, any sentiment but one. He had secured her. He forgot even to be amazed at her composure. She was his prisoner—that one fact was all he cared to know.

"I have been your prisoner the entire morning," said Mrs. Hilyard, with an attempt at her old manner, which scarcely could have deceived the minister had he preserved his wits sufficiently to notice it, but at the same time betraying a little surprise, recognizing instinctively that here she had come face to face with those blind forces of nature upon which no arguments can tell. "You were in much less doubt about your power of saving souls the last time I heard you, Mr. Vincent. Sit down, please. It is not long since we met, but many things have happened. It is kind of you to give me so early an opportunity of talking them over. I am sorry to see you look excited—but after such exertions, it is natural, I suppose—"

"You are my prisoner," repeated Vincent, without taking any notice of what she said. He was no match for her in any passage of arms. Her words fell upon his ears without any meaning. Only a dull determination possessed him. He locked the door, while she, somewhat startled in her turn, stood looking on; then he went to the window, threw it open, and called to some one below—he did not care who. "Fetch a policeman—quick—lose no time," cried Vincent. Then he closed the window, turned round, and confronted her again. At last a little agitation was visible in this invulnerable woman. For an instant her head moved with a spasmodic thrill, and her countenance changed. She gave a rapid glance round as if to see

whether any outlet was left. Vincent's eye followed hers.

"You cannot escape—you shall not escape," he said, slowly; "don't think it—nothing you can do or say will help you now."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Hilyard, with a startled, panting breath. "You have come to the inexorable," she said after a moment; "most men do, one time or another. You decline meeting us on our ground, and take to your own. Very well," she continued, seating herself by the table where she had already laid down one of the Salem hymn-books; "till this arrival happens, we may have a little conversation, Mr. Vincent. I was about to tell you something which ought to be good news. Though you don't appreciate my regard for you, I will tell it you all the same. What noise is that? Oh, the boys, I suppose, rushing off for your policeman. I hope you know what you are going to say to that functionary when he comes. In the mean time, wait a little—you must hear my news."

The only answer Vincent made was to look out again from the window, under which a little group of gazers had already collected. His companion heard the sounds below with a thrill of alarm more real than she had ever felt before. She sat rigidly, with her hand upon the hymn-book, preserving her composure by a wonderful effort, intensely alive and awake to everything, and calculating her chances with a certain desperation. This one thing alone of all that had happened, the Back Grove Street needlewoman, confident in her own powers and influence, had not foreseen.

"Listen!" she cried, with an excitement and haste which she could not quite conceal. "That man is not dead, you know. Come here—shut the window! Young man, do you hear what I say to you? Am I likely to indulge in vain talk now? Come here—here! and understand what I have to say."

"It does not matter," said Vincent, closing the window. "What you say can make no difference. There is but one thing possible now."

"Yes, you are a man!" cried the desperate woman, clasping her hands tight, and struggling with herself to keep down all appearance of her anxiety. "You are deaf, blind! You have turned your back upon

reason. That is what it always comes to. Hush ! come here—closer ; they make so much noise in the street. I believe," she said, with a dreadful smile, " you are afraid of me. You think I will stab you, or something. Don't entertain such vulgar imaginations, Mr. Vincent. I have told you before, you have fine manners though you are only a Dissenting minister. I have something to tell you—something you will be glad to know—"

Here she made another pause for breath—merely for breath—not for any answer, for there was no answer in her companion's face. He was listening for the footstep in the street—the steps of his returning messengers. And so was she, as she drew in that long breath, expanding her forlorn bosom with air, which the quick throbs of her heart so soon exhausted. She looked in his eyes with an eager fire in her own, steadily, without once shifting her gaze. The two had changed places. It was he, in his inexorableness, close shut up against any appeal or argument, that was the superior now.

" When you hear what I have to say you will not be so calm," she went on, with another involuntary heave of her breast. " Listen ! your sister is safe. Yes, you may start, but what I say is true. Don't go to the window yet. Stop, hear me ! I tell you your sister is safe. Yes, it may be the people you have sent for. Never mind, this is more important. You have locked the door, and nobody can come in. I tell you again and again, your sister is safe. That man is not dead—you know he is not dead. And yesterday—hush ! never mind !—yesterday," she said, rising up as Vincent moved, and detaining him with her hand upon his arm, which she clutched with desperate fingers, " he made a declaration that it was not she ; a declaration before the magistrates," continued Mrs. Hilyard, gasping as her strength failed her, and following him, holding his arm as he moved to the window, " that it was not she—not she ! do you understand me—not she ! He swore to it. He said it was another, and not that girl. Do you hear me ? " she cried, raising her voice, and shaking his arm wildly in the despair of the moment, but repeating her words with the clearness of desperation—" He said on his oath it was not she."

She had followed him to the window, not

pleading for herself by a single word, but with her desperate hand upon his arm, her face pinched and pale to the lips, and a horrible anxiety gleaming in the eyes which she never removed from his face. The two stood together there for a moment in that silent encounter ; he looking down at the group of people below, she watching his face with her eyes, clutching his arm with her hand, appealing to him with a speechless suspense and terror, which no words can describe. Her fate hung upon the merest thread, and she knew it. She had no more power to move him in her own person than any one of the ragged children who stood gazing up at the window. There he stood, silent, blank, immovable ; and she, suffering no expression of her dreadful suspense to escape her, stood clutching his arm, seeing, as she had never seen before, a pale vision of prisons, scaffolds, judgments, obscuring earth and heaven. She was brave and had dared them all wittingly in the crisis of her fate, but the reality caught the laboring breath from her lips, and turned her heart sick. This morning she had woken with a great burden taken off her mind, and, daring as she was, had faced the only man who had any clue to her secret, confident in his generous nature and her own power over him. But this confidence had failed her utterly, and in the very ease and relief of her mind—a relief more blessed and grateful than she would have acknowledged to any mortal—lo ! here arose before her, close and real, the spectre which she had defied. It approached step by step, while she gazed with wild eyes and panting breath upon the inexorable man who had it in his power to deliver her over to law and justice. She dared not say a word of entreaty to him ; she could only watch his eyes, those eyes which never lighted upon her, with speechless dread and anxiety. Many evils she had borne in her life—many she had confronted and overcome—obstinate will and unscrupulous resolution had carried her one way or other through all former dangers. Here for the first time she stood helpless, watching with an indescribable agony the face of the young man at whom she had so often smiled. Some sudden, unforeseen touch might still set her free. Her breath came quick in short gasps—her breast heaved—her fate was absolutely beyond her own control, in Vincent's hands.

Just then there came into the narrow street a sound of carriage-wheels. Instinctively Vincent started. The blank of his determination was broken by this distant noise. Somehow it came naturally into the silence of this room and woke up the echoes of the past in his mind ; the past—that past in which Lady Western's carriage was the celestial chariot, and she the divinest lady of life. Like a gleam of light there suddenly dawned around him a remembrance of the times he had seen her here—the times he had seen her anywhere ; the last time—the sweet hand she had laid upon his arm. Vincent's heart awoke under that touch. With a start, he looked down upon the hand which was at this moment on his arm,—not the hand of love,—fingers with the blood pressed down to the very tips, holding with desperation that arm which had the power of life and death. A hurried exclamation came from his lips ; he looked at the woman by him, and read vaguely in her face all the passion and agony there. Vaguely it occurred to him that to save or to sacrifice her was in his hands, and that he had but a moment now to decide. The carriage-wheels came nearer, nearer, ringing delicious promises in his ears—nearer, too, came the servants of that justice he had invoked ; and what plea was it, what strange propitiation, which his companion had put forth to him to stay his avenging hand ? Only a moment now ; he shook her hand off his arm, and in his turn took hold of hers ; he held her fast while she faced him in an agony of restrained suspense and terror. How her worn bosom panted with the quick-coming breath ! Her life was in his hands.

" What was that you said ? " asked Vincent, with the haste and brevity of passion, suddenly perceiving how much had to be done in this moment of fate.

The long-restrained words burst from his companion's lips almost before he had done speaking. " I said your sister was safe ! " she cried ; " I said he had declared her innocent on his oath. It was not she—he has sworn it, all a man could do. To sacrifice another," she went on breathlessly with a strong momentary shudder, pausing to listen, " will do nothing for her—nothing ? You hear what I say. It was not she ; he has sworn upon his solemn oath. Do as you will. She is safe—safe !—as safe as—

as—God help me—as safe as my child ;—and it was for her sake——"

She stopped—words would serve her no further—and just then there came a summons to the locked door. Vincent dropped her arm, and she recoiled from him with an involuntary movement ; unawares she clasped her thin hands and gave one wild look into his face. Not even now could she tell what he was going to do, this dreadful arbiter of fate. The key, as he turned it in the door, rang in her ears like thunder ; and his hand trembled as he set open the entrance to the needlewoman's mean apartment. On the threshold stood no vulgar messenger of fate, but a bright vision, sad, yet sweeter than anything else in earth or almost in heaven to Vincent. He fell back without saying anything before the startled look of that beautiful face. He let in, not law and justice, but love and pity, to this miserable room.

" O Rachel ! where have you been ? have you seen him ? have you heard of him ? where have you been ? " cried the visitor, going up to the pallid woman, whose eyes were still fixed on Vincent. Mrs. Hilyard could not speak. She dropped upon her knees by the table, shivering and crouching like a stricken creature. She leaned her head upon the hymn-book which lay there so strangely at variance with everything else around it. Pale with fright and horror, Lady Western appealed to Vincent. " She is ill, she is fainting—O Mr. Vincent, what have you been saying to her ? She was not to blame," cried the new-comer, in her ignorance. Vincent attempted no reply, offered no help. In his heart he could have snatched away those beautiful hands which embraced and comforted his " prisoner," thus rescued out of his grasp. It was hard to see her touch that guilty, conscious woman whom his own heart refused to pity. He stood by, looking on, watching her still ; the instinct of vengeance had been awakened within him. He was reluctant to let her go.

" You have been saying something to her," said Lady Western, with tears in her eyes ; " and how could *she* be to blame ? Rachel ! Oh, I wonder, I wonder if she loved him after all ? " cried the beautiful creature, in the bewilderment of her innocence and ignorance. She stood bending over the kneeling figure, troubled, perplexed almost more

than her strange sister-in-law had ever yet perplexed her. She could not account for this extraordinary access of agitation. It was now explainable, except upon that supposition which opened at once the warmest sympathies of the gentle young woman's heart.

"Rachel, dear!" she cried, kissing softly the thin hands worn with toil that covered Mrs. Hilyard's face—"he is still living, there is hope; perhaps he will get better; and he is showing a better mind too," she added, after a little tremulous pause. "I came to tell you; he has sworn that it was not—O Mr. Vincent, I sent you word immediately when I got the message—he says it was not your sister; she had nothing to do with it, he says. Now I can look you in the face again. The first thing he was able to do when he came to himself was to clear her; and now she will get better—and your dear mother?"—said Lady Western, looking wistfully into the young man's face. In that moment, while her attention was directed otherwise, Mrs. Hilyard rose up and took her seat again; took her seat because she was not able to stand, and scarcely able, by all the power of her will, to compose the nerves which, for the first time in her life, had utterly got the better of her. She wiped off the heavy moisture from her face with a furtive hand before the young Dowager turned her eyes again that way. She grasped fast hold of the only thing on the table, the Salem hymn-book, and with a vast effort regained some degree of self-command. For that precious moment she was free from observation, for nothing in the world could have prevented Vincent from returning with his own fascinated eyes the look which Lady Western turned upon him. While the two looked at each other she was safe; she collected her scattered forces in that invaluable instant. She was herself again when Lady Western looked round, somewhat nervous and embarrassed from the gaze of passion with which her look of depreciation and sympathy had been met. If a slight shiver now and then thrilled over Mrs. Hilyard's figure, it was as like to be cold as emotion. Otherwise, she sat with her arm resting on the table and her hand clenched upon the hymn-book, her thin lips clinging spasmodically to each other, and her face pallid, but to an uncritical observer

scarcely changed from the gray and vigilant composure of her usual appearance. So many storms had passed over that countenance, that the momentary agony of horror and fright, from which she had scarcely yet emerged, did not tell as it would have done on a face less worn. Her voice was sharp and strained when she spoke, and she watched Vincent's eye with a keenness of which he was vividly conscious; but Lady Western, who did not go deep into looks and meanings, found nothing very unusual in what she said.

"I think Mr. Vincent was doubtful of my information," she said. "I heard it this morning from Langridge, the groom, who once belonged to my family, you know, Alice; and—and lets me know if anything more than usual happens," she said, abruptly stopping to draw breath. "Mr. Vincent was doubtful of me. Now this matter is cleared up, I dare say he will understand me when I say that I never could have allowed things to go further. I am only a needlewoman, and live in Back Grove Street," continued Mrs. Hilyard, recovering gradually as she spoke; "but I have certain things still in my power. Mr. Vincent will understand what I mean," she went on, fixing her eyes upon him, and unable to repress an occasional gasp which interrupted her words, "when I say that I should not have suffered it to go further. I should not have shrunk from any sacrifice. My dear, I have been a little shaken and agitated, as you perceive. Mr. Vincent wants to keep his eye upon me. Take me with you, Alice," said the bold woman, once more looking Vincent full in the face; "take charge of me, keep me prisoner until all this is cleared up. I am about tired of living a disguised princess. Send up your people for my possessions here, and take me with you. You will find me safe, Mr. Vincent, when you happen to want me, with Lady Western in Grange Lane."

"O Rachel, I am so glad!" cried Lady Western; "I cannot for my life imagine what you mean by keeping you my prisoner, and all that; but Mr. Vincent may be very sure you will be safe with me;—since he has so much interest in your movements," continued the young Dowager, turning her perplexed eyes from one to the other. She had not the remotest idea what it all meant.

She was perhaps a little surprised to perceive that, after all, Vincent's interest was less with herself than with this strange woman, whose calmness and agitation were equally confusing and unintelligible. "We shall of course always be happy to see Mr. Vincent in Grange Lane," she concluded, with a somewhat stately courtesy. He did not look at her; he was looking at the other, whose eyes were fixed upon his face. Between these eyes Lady Western, much amazed, could perceive a secret communication passing. What could it mean? The consciousness of this mystery between them, which she did not know, annoyed her, notwithstanding her sweet temper. She withdrew her hand instinctively from Mrs. Hilyard's, which she had taken in momentary enthusiasm, and watched their looks of intelligence with half-offended eyes.

"Yes," said the needlewoman, speaking with her eyes fixed upon Vincent, though she did not address him, and making a desperate effort after her usual manner; "I do not think Back Grove Street will do any longer. One may as well take advantage of the accident which has brought our family affairs before the world to come alive again. It is a thing one must do sooner or later. So, if your carriage is close, Alice, I will go home with you. I shall miss Salem," said the audacious woman, "though you are so much less sure about doing good than you used to be, Mr. Vincent. If my soul happens to be saved, however," she continued, with a strange softening of her fixed and gleaming eyes—"if that is of much importance, or has any merit in it—you will have had some share in the achievement. You will?" She said the words with a keen sharpness of interrogation, much unlike their more obvious meaning. "You will," she repeated again, more softly—"you will!" Her thin hands came together for a moment in a clasp of mute supplication; her eyes, always hitherto looking down upon him from heights of dark knowledge and experience, looked up in his face with an anguish of entreaty which startled Vincent. Just at that moment the sounds of the street grew louder, and a voice of authority was audible ordering some one to clear the way. Mrs. Hilyard did not speak, but she put out her hand and touched Lady Western's shawl, lifting its long fringes, and twisting them round

those fingers on which the marks of her long labor were still visible. She withdrew as she did this her eyes from his face. Her fate was absolutely in his hands.

"Ladies," said Vincent, hoarsely, after vainly trying to clear his agitated voice, "it is better you should leave this place at once. I will see you to your carriage. If I do wrong the consequences will fall hardest on me. Don't say anything; either way, talking will do little good. You are her shield and defence," he said, looking at Lady Western, with an excitement which he could not quite keep under. "When she touches you, she becomes sacred. You will keep her safe—safe? you will not let her go?"

"Yes; I will keep her safe," said the beauty, opening her lovely, astonished eyes. "Is she in danger? O Mr. Vincent, your trouble has been too much for you! remember your sister is safe now."

"Is she?" said the minister; he was bitter in his heart, even though that hand was once more laid on his arm. "Safe!—with a broken heart and a ruined life; but what does that matter? It is all we are good for; though we may go mad and die."

"Oh, not you! not you!" said Lady Western, gazing at him with the tenderest pity in her sweet eyes. "You must not say so; I should be so unhappy." Her beautiful hand pressed his arm with the lightest momentary pressure. She could not help herself; to see suffering and not to do what was in her to soothe it was not possible to her soft heart. Whatever harm that temporary opiate might do, nothing in the world could have prevented her gentle kindness from administering it. She went down the humble stairs leaning on his arm, with Mrs. Hilyard following close. The young man put aside the little crowd he himself had collected, and put them in the carriage. He saw them drive away with a kind of despairing exaltation and excitement, and turned to the difficulties which remained to him—to explain himself and send the tardy ministers of justice away. He explained, as he best could, that he had been mistaken, and once more emptied his scanty purse, where there was now little enough left. When he had got rid of the disappointed group about the door, he went home slowly in the reaction of his violence and haste. Susan was safe; was she safe? delivered from

this dreadful accusation—allowed to drop back at least with her broken heart into the deep silences of privacy and unininvadable domestic life. Well, it was a mercy, a great mercy, though he could not realize it. He went home slowly, tingling with the strain of these strange hours; was it Sunday still? was it only an hour ago that Salem had thrilled to the discourse in which his passion and despair had found vent? Vincent neither comprehended himself nor the hours, full of strange fate, which were gliding over him. He went home exhausted, as if with a great conflict; conscious of some relief in his heart, but half unwilling to confess to it, or to realize the means by which it had dawned upon him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHEN Vincent entered the house, the sensation of quiet in it struck him with a vague consolation which he could scarcely explain. Perhaps only because it was Sunday; but there was no reproachful landlady, no distracting sound from above—all quiet, Sunday leisure, Sunday decorum, as of old. When he went up hurriedly to his former sitting-room, where Daly still had possession, he found the man with a deprecating face, uneasily reading a Sunday newspaper, perched upon the edge of a chair. His reign was over—for to him, too, a message had come by the telegraph. Two letters for Vincent lay on the table—one a telegraphic despatch from Dover, the other a dainty little note, which he opened as a man opens the first written communication he receives from the woman of all women. He knew what was in it; but he read it as eagerly as if he expected to find something new in the mild little epistle, with its gentle attempt at congratulation. The news was true. Either remorse had seized upon Mildmay in the prospect of death, or the lingering traditions of honor in his heart had asserted themselves on Susan's behalf. He had declared her entirely innocent; he had even gone farther, he had sworn that it was only as the companion of his daughter that Susan had accompanied them, and as such that he had treated her. The deposition taken by the magistrates was sent to Vincent in an abridged form, but what it conveyed was clear beyond dispute. So far as the words of this apparently dying man could be re-

ceived, Susan was spotless—without blood on her hand, or speck upon her good fame. The lesser and the greater guilt were both cleared from that young head which had not been strong enough to wait for this vindication. Though he said, Thank God, from the bottom of his heart, an unspeakable bitterness filled Vincent's soul as he read. Here was a deliverance, full, lavish, unlooked for; but who could tell that the poor girl, crazed with misery, would ever be any the better for it? who could tell whether this vindication might be of any further use than to lighten the cloud upon Susan's grave?

With this thought in his mind, he went to the sick-room, where everything seemed quiet, not quite sure that his mother, absorbed as she was in Susan's present danger, could be able to realize the wonderful deliverance which had come to them. But matters were changed there as elsewhere. Between the door and the bed on which Susan lay, a large folding-screen had been set up, and in the darkened space between this and the door sat Mrs. Vincent, with Dr. Rider and his wife on each side, evidently persuading and arguing with her on some point which she was reluctant to yield to them. They were talking in whispers under their breath, and a certain air of stillness, of calm and repose, which Vincent could scarcely comprehend was in the hushed room.

"I assure you, on my word," said Dr. Rider, lifting his eyes as Vincent opened the door, and beckoning him softly to come in, "that this change is more than I dared hope for. The chances are she will wake up out of danger. Nothing can be done for her but to keep her perfectly quiet; and my wife will watch, if you will rest;—for our patient's sake!" said the anxious doctor, still motioning Vincent forward, and appealing to him with his eyes.

"Mr. Vincent has something to tell you," said the quick little woman, impetuous even in her whisper, who was Dr. Rider's wife. "He must not come and talk here. He might wake her. Take him away. Edward, take them both away. Mrs. Vincent, you must go and hear what he has to say."

"O Arthur! my dear boy," cried his mother, looking up to him with moist eyes. "It is I who have something to tell. My child is perhaps to get well, Arthur. Oh! my own boy, after all, she is going to get

better. We shall have Susan again. Hush! doctor, please let me go back again; something stirred—I think something stirred; and perhaps she might want something, and the nurse would not observe. Tired?—no, no; I am not tired. I have always watched them when they were ill, all their lives. They never had any nurse in sickness but their mother. Arthur, you know I am not tired. O doctor, perhaps you would order something while he is here, for my son; he has been agitated and anxious, and he is not so strong—not nearly so strong as I am; but, my dear," said the widow, looking up in her son's face with a wistful eagerness, "when Susan gets better, all will be—well."

She said the last words with a trembling, prolonged sigh. Poor mother, in that very moment she had recalled almost for the first time how far from well everything would be. Her face darkened over piteously as she spoke. She rose up, stung into new energy by this dreadful thought, which had been hitherto mercifully obscured by Susan's danger. "Let me go back—don't say anything. Nobody can watch my child but me," said the heart-broken woman; and once more she looked in her son's face. She wanted to read there what had happened—to ascertain from him, without any one else being the wiser, all the dreadful particulars which now, in the first relief of Susan's recovery, had burst into sudden shape upon her sight. "Doctor, we will not detain you; her brother and I will watch my child," said Mrs. Vincent. The light forsook her eyes as she rose in that new and darker depth of anxiety; her little figure tottered trying to stand as she held out her hand to her son. "You and me—only you and me, Arthur—we must never leave her; though everybody is so kind—" said the minister's mother, turning with her smile of martyrdom, though her eyes were blind and she could not see them, to Dr. Rider and his wife.

Vincent took his mother's hands and put her tenderly back in her chair. "I have good news, too," he said; "all will be well, mother dear. This man who has wrought us so much trouble is not dead. I told you, but you did not understand it; and he declares that Susan—"

"Arthur!" cried Mrs. Vincent, with a sharp outcry of alarm and remonstrance.

"O God forgive me! I will wake my child, Arthur! The doctor is very good," added the widow, looking round upon them always with the instinct of conciliating Arthur's friends; "and so is Mrs. Rider; but every family has its private affairs," she concluded, with a wistful, deprecating smile, all the time making signs to Arthur to stop him in his indiscreet revelations. "My dear, you will tell me presently when we are alone."

"Ah, mother," said Vincent, with a suppressed groan, "there is nothing private now in our family affairs. Hush! listen—Susan is cleared; he swears she had nothing to do with it; he swears that she was his daughter's companion only. Mother! Good heavens! doctor, what has happened? She looks as if she were dying. Mother! What have I done? I have killed her with my good news."

"Hush, hush—she has fainted—all will come right; let us get her away," cried Dr. Rider under his breath. Between them the two young men carried her out of the room, which Mrs. Rider closed after them with a certain triumph. The widow was not in so deep a faint but the fresher air outside and the motion revived her. It was more a sudden failing of her faculties in the height of emotion than actual insensibility. She made feeble effort to resist and return into Susan's room. "You will wake her," said Dr. Rider in her ear; and the poor mother sank back in their arms, fixing her wistful, misty eyes, in which everything swam, upon her son. Her lips moved as she looked at him, though he could not hear her say a word; but the expression in her face, half awakened only from the incomprehension of her swoon, was not to be mistaken or resisted. Vincent bent down over her, and repeated what he had said as he had carried her to another room. "Susan is safe—Susan is innocent. It is all over; mother, you understand me?" he said, repeating it again and again. Mrs. Vincent leaned back upon his shoulder with a yielding of all her fatigued frame and worn-out mind. She understood him, not with her understanding as yet, but with her heart which melted into unspeakable relief and comfort without knowing why. She closed her eyes in that wonderful consciousness of some great mercy that had happened to her; the first time she had closed them voluntarily for many nights and days. When

they laid her down on the bed which had been hurriedly prepared for her, her eyes were still closed, and tears stealing softly out under the lids. She could not break out into expressions of thankfulness — the joy went to her heart.

Dr. Rider thought it judicious to leave her so, and retired from the bedside with Vincent, not without some anxious curiosity in his own mind to hear all "the rights" of the matter. Perhaps the hum of their voices, quietly though they spoke, aroused her from her trance of silent gratitude. When she called Arthur faintly, and when they both hurried to her, Mrs. Vincent was sitting up in bed wiping off the tears from her cheeks. "Arthur, dear, said the widow, "I am quite sure Dr. Rider will understand that what he has heard is in the strictest confidence; for to be sure," she continued, with a faint smile breaking over her wan face, "nobody could have any doubt about my Susan. It only had to be set right — and I knew when my son came home he would set it right," said Mrs. Vincent, looking full in Dr. Rider's face. "It has all happened because I had not my wits about me as I ought to have had, and was not used to act for myself; but when my son came back — Arthur, my own boy, it was all my fault, but I knew you would set it right—and as for my Susan, nobody could have any doubt; and you will both forgive your poor mother. I don't mind saying this before the doctor," she repeated again, once more looking in his face; "because he has seen us in all our trouble, and I am sure we may trust Dr. Rider; but, my dear, you know our private affairs are not to be talked of before strangers—especially," said the widow, with a long trembling sigh of relief and comfort, "when God has been so good to us, and all is to be well."

The two young men looked at each other in silence with a certain awe. All the dreadful interval which had passed between this Sunday afternoon and the day of Susan's return, had been a blank to Mrs. Vincent so far as the outer world was concerned. Her daughter's illness and danger had rapt her altogether out of ordinary life. She took up her burden only where it had dropped off from her in the consuming anxiety for Susan's life and reason, in which all other fears had been lost. Just at the point where she had forgotten it, where she had still

faced the world with the despairing assumption that all would be right when Arthur returned, she bethought herself now of that frightful shadow which had never been revealed in its full horror to her eyes. Now that Arthur's assurance relieved her heart of that, the widow took up her old position instinctively. She knew nothing of the comments in the newspapers, the vulgar publicity to which poor Susan's story had come. She wanted to impress upon Dr. Rider's mind, by way of making up for her son's imprudence, that he was specially trusted, and that she did not mind speaking before him because he had seen all their trouble. Such was the poor mother's idea as she sat upon the bed where they had carried her, wiping the tears of joy from her wan and worn face. She forgot all the weary days that had come and gone. She took up the story just at the point where she, after all her martyrdom and strenuous upholding of Arthur's cause, had suddenly sunk into Susan's sick-room and left it. Now she reappeared with Arthur's banner once more in her hands—always strong in that assumption that nobody could doubt as to Susan, and that Arthur had but to come home to set all right. Dr. Rider held up his warning finger when he saw Vincent about to speak. This delusion was salvation to the widow.

"But I must go back to Susan, doctor," said Mrs. Vincent. "If she should wake and find a stranger there!—though Mrs. Rider is so kind. But I am much stronger than I look—watching never does me any harm; and now that my mind is easy—people don't require much sleep at my time of life. And, Arthur, when my dear child sees me, she will know that all is well—all is well," repeated the widow, with trembling lips. "I must go to Susan, doctor; think if she should wake!"

"But she must not wake," said Dr. Rider, "and if you stay quietly here she will not wake, for my wife will keep everything still. You will have a great deal to do for her when she is awake and conscious. Now you must rest."

"I shall have a great deal to do for her? Dr. Rider means she will want nursing, Arthur," said Mrs. Vincent, "after such an illness; but she might miss me even in her sleep, or she might—"

"Mother, you must rest for Susan's sake; if you make yourself ill, who will be able to take care of her?" said Vincent, who felt her hand tremble in his, and saw with how much difficulty she sustained the nervous shivering of her frame. She looked up into his face with those anxious eyes which strove to read his without being able to comprehend all the meanings there. Then the widow turned with a feminine artifice to Dr. Rider.

"Doctor, if you will bring me word that my child is still asleep—if you will tell me exactly what you think, and that she is going on well," said Mrs. Vincent; "you are always so kind. O Arthur, my dear boy," cried the widow, taking his hand and caressing it between her own, "now that he is gone, tell me. Is it quite true?—is all well again? but you must never bring in Susan's name. Nobody must have it in their power to say a word about your sister, Arthur, dear. And, oh, I hope you have been prudent and not said anything among your people. Hush! he will be coming back; is it quite true, Arthur? Tell me that my dear child has come safe out of it all, and nothing has happened. Tell me! Oh, speak to me, Arthur, dear!"

"It is quite true," said Vincent, meeting his mother's eyes with a strange blending of pity and thankfulness. He did not say enough to satisfy her. She drew him closer, looking wistfully into his face. The winter afternoon was darkening, the room was cold, the atmosphere dreary. The widow held her son close, and fixed upon him her anxious, inquiring eyes. "It is quite true, Arthur! There is nothing behind that you are hiding from me?" she said, with her lips almost touching his cheek, and her wistful eyes searching his meaning. "O my dear boy, don't hide anything from me. I am able to bear it, Arthur. Whatever it is, I ought to know."

"What I have told you is the simple truth, mother," said Vincent, not without a pang. "He has made a declaration before the magistrates—"

Mrs. Vincent started so much that the bed on which she sat shook. "Before the magistrates!" she said, with a faint cry. Then after a pause—"But, thank God, it is not here, Arthur, nor at Lonsdale, nor anywhere where we are known. And he said

that—that—he had never harmed my child? O Arthur, Arthur—your sister!—that she should ever be spoken of so! And he was not killed? I do not understand it, my dear. I cannot see all the rights of it; but it is a great comfort to have you to myself for a moment, and to feel as if perhaps things might come right again. Hush! I think the doctor must be coming. Speak very low. My dear boy, you don't mean it, but you are imprudent; and, O Arthur, with a troublesome flock like yours you must not commit yourself! You must not let your sister's name be talked of among the people. Hush, hush, I hear the doctor at the door."

And the widow put her son away from her, and leaned her head upon her hands instead of upon his shoulder. She would not even let the doctor suppose that she had seized that moment to inquire further, or that she was anything but sure and confident that all was going well.

"She is in the most beautiful sleep," said the enthusiastic doctor, "and Nettie is by her. Now, Mrs. Vincent, here is something you must take; and when you wake up again I will take you to your daughter, and I have very little doubt you will find her on the fair way for recovery—recovery in every sense," added Dr. Rider, incautiously; "twice saved—and I hope you will have no more of such uneasiness as you have suffered on her behalf."

"Indeed, I have had very little uneasiness with my children," said Mrs. Vincent, drawing up her little figure on the bed. "Susan never had a severe illness before. When she came here first she was suffering from a—a bad fright, doctor. I told you so at the time; and I was so weak and so alarmed, Arthur, dear, that I fear Dr. Rider has misunderstood me. When one is not much used to illness," said the mother, with her pathetic jesuitry, "one thinks there never was anything so bad as one's own case, and I was foolish and upset. Yes, I will take it, doctor. Now that I am easy in my mind, I will take anything you please; and you will let me know if she wakes, or if she stirs. Whatever happens, you will let me know that moment? Arthur, you will see that they let me know?"

The doctor promised, anxiously putting the draught into her hands: he would have promised any impossible thing at the mo-

ment, so eager was he to get her persuaded to rest.

"I have not talked so much for—I wonder how long it is?" said the widow, with a faint smile. "O Arthur, dear, I feel as if somehow a millstone had been on my heart, and God had taken it off. Doctor, it is—it is—all your doing, under Providence," said the little woman, looking full in his face. Perhaps she believed it—at least she meant him to believe so. She swallowed the draught he gave her with that smile upon her face, and laid down her throbbing head in the quietness and darkness. "Go with the doctor, Arthur, dear," she said, denying the yearning in her heart to question her son farther, lest Dr. Rider might perhaps suppose all was not so well as she said; "and, oh, be sure to tell me the very moment that Susan wakes!" She watched them gliding noiselessly out of the room, two dark figures in the darkness. She lay down alone, throbbing all over with thrills of pain, which were half pleasure. She began to be conscious again of her own body and life; and the wistful curiosity that possessed her was not strong enough to neutralize the positive unmistakable joy. Susan was recovering. Susan was innocent. What trouble could there be heavy enough to take away the comfort out of words like these!

"Now she will sleep. Mr. Vincent, I congratulate you on having such pure blood in your veins; not robust, you know, but far better—such sweet, perfect health as one rarely meets with now-a-days," said the doctor, under his breath, with professional enthusiasm; "all the better for your sister that she came of such a stock. My wife, now, is another example—not robust, as I say—natures delicately organized, but in such exquisite adjustment, and with such elasticity! Mrs. Vincent will go to sleep like a baby, and wake able for—anything that God may please to send her," said Dr. Rider, with reverence. "They will both sleep till to-morrow if all goes well. Hush!—Well, I may be absurd, for neither of them could hear us here; but still it is best to err on the safe side."

"But Susan—you are not deceiving us—Susan is—" said Vincent, with sudden alarm.

"She is asleep," said Dr. Rider; "and,

if I can, I will remain till she wakes; it is life or death."

They parted thus—the doctor to the little room below-stairs, where Vincent's dinner awaited him, and the young minister himself to his own room, where he went into the darkness with a kind of bewildered uncertainty and incomprehension of the events about him. To think that this day, with all its strange encounters and unexpected incidents, was Sunday, as he suddenly remembered it to be—that this morning he had preached, and this evening had to preach again, completed in Vincent's mind the utter chaos and disturbance of ordinary life. It struck him dumb to remember that by and by he must again ascend the pulpit, and go through all his duties. Was he an imposter, doing all this mechanically? He debated the question dully in his own mind, as he sat too much bewildered to do anything else in the dark in his bed-chamber, pondering with a certain confused gravity and consolation over all that had happened. But faculties, which are confused by sudden comfort and relief, are very different from faculties obscured and confounded by suffering. He sat vaguely in the dark, wondering over his strange position. This morning, even in the height of his despair, he had at least some idea what he was going to do in that pulpit of Salem. It was a sacrifice—a martyrdom to accomplish—a wild outcry and complaint to pour forth to the world. This evening he sat wasting the precious moments in the soft darkness, without knowing a word of what he was to say—without being able to realize the fact, that by and by he should have to go out through the sharp air echoing with church-bells—to see once more all those watchful faces turned upon him, and to communicate such instruction as was in him to his flock. A sense of exhaustion and satisfaction was in Vincent's heart. He sat listless in a vague comfort and weariness, his head throbbing with the fumes of his past excitement, yet not aching. It was only now that he realized the rolling off from his head of this dark cloud of horror and shame. Susan was recovering—Susan was innocent. He became aware of the facts much in the same way as his mother became aware of them ere she dropped to sleep in the blessed darkness of the adjoin-

ing room. Confused as he was, with his brain still full of the pulsations of the past, he was so far conscious of what had happened. He sat in his reverie, regardless of the time, and everything else that he ought to have attended to. The little maid came and knocked at his door to say his dinner had been waiting for an hour, and he answered, "Yes; he was coming," but sat still in the darkness. Then the landlady herself, compunctions, beginning to feel the thrills of returning comfort which had entered her house, came tapping softly to say it was near six, and wouldn't Mr. Vincent take something before it was time for chapel? Mr. Vincent said "Yes" again, but did not move; and it was only when he heard the church-bells tingling into the night air that he got up at last, and, stealing first to the door of Susan's room, where he ascertained that she still slept, and then to his mother's, where he could hear her soft, regular breathing in the darkness, he went away in an indescribably exalted condition of mind to Salem and his duty. There is a kind of weakness incident to excitement of mind and neglect of body, which is akin to the ecstatic state in which men dream dreams and see visions. Vincent was in that condition tonight. He was not careful what anybody would say or think; he no longer pictured to himself the upturned faces in Salem, all conscious of the tragedy which was connected with his name. The sense of deliverance in his heart emancipated him, and gave a contrary impulse to his thoughts. In the weakness of an excited and exhausted frame, a certain gleam of the ineffable and miraculous came over the young man. He was again in the world where God stoops down to change with one touch of his finger the whole current of man's life—the world of childhood, of genius, of faith; that other world, dark sphere of necessity and fate, where nothing could stay the development into dread immortality of the obstinate human intelligence, and where dreary echoes of speculation still questioned whether any change were possible in heart and spirit, or if saving souls were a mere figure of speech, floated away far off over his head, a dark fiction of despair. In this state of mind he went back to the pulpit where, in the morning, he had thrilled his audience with all those wild complications of thought which

end in nothing. Salem was again crowded—not a corner of the chapel remained unfilled; and again many of the more zealous members were driven out of their seats by the influx of the crowd. Vincent, who had no sermon to preach, and nothing except the fulness that was in his heart to say, took up again his subject of the morning. He told his audience with the unpremeditated skill of a natural orator, that while Reason considered all the desperate chances, and concluded that wonderful work impossible, God, with the lifting of his countenance, with the touch of his power, made the darkness light before him, and changed the very earth and heavens around the wondering soul. Lifted out of the region of reasonableness himself, he explained to his astonished audience how Reason halts in her conclusions, how miracle and wonder are of all occurrences the most natural, and how, between God and man, there are no boundaries of possibility. It was a strange sermon, without any text or divisions, irregular in its form, sometimes broken in its utterance; but the man who spoke was in a "rapture"—a state of fasting and ecstasy. He saw indistinctly that there were glistening eyes in the crowd, and felt what was somewhat an unusual consciousness—that his heart had made communications to other hearts in his audience almost without his knowing it; but he did not observe that nobody came to the vestry to congratulate him, that Tozer looked disturbed, and that the deacons averted their benign countenances. When he had done his work, he went home without waiting to talk to anybody—without, indeed, thinking any more of Salem—through the crowd, in the darkness, passing group after group in earnest discussion of the minister. He went back still in that exalted condition of mind, unaware that he passed Mrs. Tozer and Phoebe, who were much disposed to join him—and was in his own house sooner than most of his congregation. All within was quiet, lost in the most grateful and profound stillness. Sleep seemed to brood over the delivered house. Vincent spoke to the doctor who still waited, and whose hopes were rising higher and higher, and then ate something, and said his prayers, and went to rest like a child. The family, so worn out with labor and trial and sorrow, slept profoundly under the quiet stars. Those hard heavens,

from which an indifferent God saw the Innocents murdered and made no sign, had melted into the sweet natural firmament, above which the great Father watches unwearyed. The sudden change was more than mere deliverance to the young Nonconformist. He slept and took rest in the sweet surprise and thankfulness of his soul. His life and heart, still young and incapable of despair, had got back out of hard anguishes and miseries which no one could soften, to the sweet miraculous world in which circumstances are always changing, and God interferes forever.

CHAPTER XXX.

WHEN Vincent awoke next morning, his mother was standing by his bedside. Her eyes were dewy and moist, a faint tinge of color was on her sweet old cheek, and her steps tottered a little as she came up to his bed and stooped to kiss him. "O Arthur, my dear boy, she knows me!" said Mrs. Vincent, putting up her hand to her eyes. "I must not be away from her a moment, but I could not resist coming to tell you. She knows me, dear. Make haste and dress, and come and see your sister, Arthur; and I will give orders about your breakfast as I go back. My dear, I know you have been anxious," said the widow, putting back his hair fondly with the soft little hand which still trembled; "though men have not the way of showing it, I know you have been very anxious. You looked quite pale and thin as you slept. But I must speak to the landlady now and see about your food. Come to Susan's room as soon as you are dressed, and I will order your breakfast, my dear boy," said his mother, going softly out again, with her tender little figure all beautified, and trembling with joy. Mrs. Vincent met the landlady near the door, and stopped to speak to her. "My daughter is a great deal better," said the minister's mother. "I have been so anxious, I have never been able to thank you as I ought to have done for your kindness and attention. We have been as quiet as if we had been at home. We will all remember your attention, though I have never been able to thank you before; and I am sure it is very gratifying to my son to think it is one of his own flock who has taken so much pains for us. Mr. Vincent has been very anxious

about his sister," continued the widow; "I fear he has not been taking his food, nor keeping his regular time for meals. You would oblige me very much if you would try to have something nice for his breakfast. We were all much shaken yesterday, being so anxious;—some new-laid eggs perhaps—though I know they are scarce in a town at this time of the year—or anything you can think of that will tempt him to eat. I would not say so much," said Mrs. Vincent, smiling upon the astonished landlady, and leaning to support her own weakness on the rail of the passage upon which the staircase opened, "but that I know your kind interest in your minister. I am sure you will take all the pains you can to get him to attend to his precious health. Thank you. I am very much obliged."

With this the little woman passed on, feeling indeed too weak to stand longer; and leaving the landlady, who had intended to mingle some statement of her own grievances with her congratulations, with the plea quietly taken out of her hands, and the entire matter disposed of. Mrs. Vincent was moving back again to the sick-room when the door opened down-stairs, and some one asked for Mr. Vincent, and came up hurriedly. The minister's mother recognized Tozer's voice, and made a pause. She was glad of the opportunity to make sure that all was well in the flock. She leant over the railing to shake hands with the buttermen, moved to a little effusion of thankfulness by the recollection of the state of anxiety she was in when she saw him last.

"My son is not up yet," she said. "We were very anxious yesterday. It was the crisis of the fever, and everything depended upon it. I dare say you would see how anxious Mr. Vincent was; but thank Heaven now all is going on well."

"You see, ma'am," said Tozer, "it must have all been on the nerves, and to be sure there aint nothing more likely to be serviceable than good news. It's in the paper this morning. As soon as I see it, I said to my missis, 'This is why the minister was so pecooliar yesterday.' I divined it in a moment, ma'am; though it wasn't to say prudent, Mrs. Vincent, and not as you would have advised no more nor myself, to fly off like that out of chapel, without as much as

shaking hands with one o' the deacons. But I make allowances, I do ; and when I see it in the paper, I said to my missis, 'It's all along o' this Mr. Vincent was so queer.' I don't doubt as it'll be quite looked over, and thought no more of, when it's known what's the news."

"What news ?" said Mrs. Vincent, faintly, holding fast by the railing. "You mean the news of my dear child's recovery," she added, after a breathless pause. "Have they put it in the papers ? I am sure it is very good, but I never heard of such a thing before. She has been very ill to be sure—but most people are very ill once in their lives," said the widow, gasping a little for breath, and fixing her eyes upon the paper which Tozer held in his hand.

"Poor soul !" said the deacon, compassionately, "it aint no wonder, considering all things. Phoebe would have come the very first day to say, Could she be of any use ? but her mother wasn't agreeable. Women has their own ways of managing ; but they'll both come to-day, now all's cleared up, if you'll excuse me. And now, ma'am, I'll go on to the minister and see if there's anything as he'd like me to do, for Pigeon and the rest was put out, there's no denying of it ; but if things is set straight directly, what with this news, and what with them sermons yesterday, I don't think as it'll do no harm. I said to him, as this Sunday was half the battle," said the worthy buttermen, reflectively ; "and he did his best—I wouldn't say as he didn't do his best ; and I'm not the man as will forsake my pastor when he's in trouble. Good-morning, ma'am ; and my best respects to miss, and I hope as she'll soon be well again. There aint no man as could rejoice more nor me at this news."

Tozer went on to Vincent's room, at the door of which the minister had appeared summoning him with some impatience and anxiety—"News ? what news ?" said Mrs. Vincent faintly to herself, as she held by the rail and felt the light forsaking her eyes in a new mist of sudden dread. She caught the look of the landlady at that moment, a look of half pity, curiosity, and knowledge, which startled her back to her defences. With sudden firmness she gathered herself together, and went on to the sick-room, leaving behind her, as she closed the door, the whole troubled world, which seemed to know

better about her most intimate affairs than she did ; and those newspapers which somehow mentioned Susan's name, that sweet maiden name which it was desecration to see so much as named in print. Rather, the widow carried that uneasy world in with her to the sick-room which she had left a few minutes before in all the effusion of un-hoped-for joy. Everything still was not well though Susan was getting better. She sat down by the bedside where Susan lay languid and pale, showing the change in her by little more than quietness and a faint recognition of her mother, and in her troubled heart began to look the new state of affairs in the face, and to make up her mind that more of the causes of Susan's illness than she had supposed known, must have become public. And then Arthur and his flock, that flock which he evidently had somehow affronted on the previous day. Mrs. Vincent pondered with all the natural distrust of a woman over Arthur's imprudence. She almost chafed at her necessary confinement by her daughter's bedside ; if she herself, who had been a minister's wife for thirty years and knew the ways of a congregation, and how it must be managed, could only get into the field to bring her son out of the difficult passages which she had no faith in his own power to steer through ! So the poor mother experienced how, when absorbing grief is removed, a host of complicated anxieties hasten in to fill up its place. She was no longer bowed down under an overwhelming dread, but she was consumed by restless desires to be doing, cravings to know all, fears for what might at the moment be happening out of her range and influence. What might Arthur, always incautious, be confiding to Tozer even now—perhaps telling him those "private affairs" which the widow would have defended against exposure with her very life—perhaps chaffing at Salem and rejecting that yoke which, being a minister, he must bear. It was all Mrs. Vincent could do to keep herself still on her chair, and to maintain that quietness which was necessary for Susan. If only she could have been there to soften his impatience and make the best of his unnecessary confidences ! Many a time before this, the widow had been compelled to submit to that female tribulation—to be shut up apart, and leave the great events outside to be transacted by these in-

cautious masculine hands, in which, at the bottom of her heart, a woman seldom has perfect confidence when her own supervising influence is withdrawn. Mrs. Vincent felt instinctively that Arthur would commit himself as she sat resigned but troubled by Susan's bed.

Tozer went directly to the door of Vincent's room, where the minister, only half dressed, but much alarmed to see the colloquy which was going on between his mother and the buttermen, was waiting for him. The deacon squeezed the young man's hand with a hearty pressure. His aspect was so fatherly and confidential, that it brought back to the mind of the young Non-conformist a certain rueful, half-comic recollection of the suppers in the back parlor, and all the old troubles of the pastor of Salem, which heavier shadows had driven out of his mind. Tozer held up triumphantly the paper in his hand.

"You've seen it, sir?" said the buttermen; "first thing I did this morning was to look up whether there wasn't nothing about it in the latest intelligence; for the *Gazette* has been very particular, knowing, at Carlingford, folks would be interested—and here it is sure enough, Mr. Vincent; and we nigh gave three cheers, me and the lads in the shop."

To this Vincent listened with a darkening brow and an impatience which he did not attempt to conceal. He took the paper with again that quick sense of the intolerable which prompted him to tear the innocent broadsheet in pieces and tread it under foot. The *Gazette* contained, with a heading in large characters, the following paragraph:—

"THE DOVER TRAGEDY.

"Our readers will be glad to hear that the unfortunate young lady, closely connected with a reverend gentleman well-known in Carlingford, whose name has been so unhappily mixed up in this mysterious affair, is likely to be fully exonerated from the charge rashly brought against her. In the deposition of the wounded man, which was taken late on Saturday night, by Mr. Everett, the stipendiary magistrate of Dover, he distinctly declares that Miss Vincent was not the party who fired the pistol, nor in any way connected with it—that she had accompanied his daughter merely as companion on a hasty journey, and that, in short, instead of the romantic connection supposed

to subsist between the parties, with all the passions of love and revenge naturally involved, the ties between them were of the simplest and most temporary character. We are grieved to add, that the fright and horror of her awful position had overpowered Miss Vincent immediately on her arrival here, and brought on a brain fever, which, of course, made the unfortunate young lady, who is understood to possess great personal attractions, quite unable to explain the suspicious circumstances surrounding her. We have now only to congratulate her respectable family on her exoneration from a very shocking charge, and hope her innocence will soon be confirmed by full legal acquittal. Our readers will find Colonel Mildmay's deposition on another page. It will be perceived that he obstinately refuses to indicate who was the real perpetrator of the deed. Suspicion has been directed to his groom, who accompanied him, in whom, however, the wounded man seems to repose perfect confidence. He is still in a very precarious state, and great doubts are entertained of his ultimate recovery."

"There, Mr. Vincent, that's gratifying—that is," said Tozer, as Vincent laid down the paper; "and I come over directly I see it to let you know. *He's* not gone yet?" added the buttermen, inquiringly, pointing his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the room where Daly still held possession. "Nor wont go, neither, till it's settled somehow. She's cleared, but she aint out o' the hands of the law. I've had some experience in them sort of affairs; and what I come to advise special, Mr. Vincent, was that you and me should go off to Mr. Brown in the High Street, or to Mr. Beke as is our magistrate here, and put in bail. They'll take bail for her appearance, now; and us as is two responsible parties they can't go again' taking you and me; and we'll have the police out o' the house and all things square," said the worthy deacon, "afore Mrs. Vincent gets movin' about again, or the young lady knows what's agoing on; that's what I'd do without delay, Mr. Vincent, if I was you."

Vincent grasped the exultant buttermen's hand in an overflow of gratitude and compunction. "I shall never forget your kindness," he said, with a little tremor in his voice. "You have been a true friend. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Let us go at once, and do what you say."

"I never was the man to forsake my pas-

tor in trouble—not to say a young man like you as is a credit to the connection, and the best preacher I may say as I ever have heard in Salem," said Tozer, with effusion, returning the grasp; "but we aint agoing a step till you've had your breakfast. Your good mother, Mrs. Vincent, as is a real lady, sir, and would never advise you different from what I would myself, being for your own interests, would have little opinion of me if I took you out on a Monday mornin' after your labors without so much as a bit o' breakfast to sustain you. I'll sit by you while you're a-eating of your bacon. There's a deal to consider of concerning Salem as I couldn't well bring before you as long as you were in such trouble. Them were uncommon sermons, sir, yesterday; I don't know as I ever heard anything as was just to be compared with the mornin' discourse, and most of the flock was of my opinion; but what is the good of standing up for the pastor—I ask you candid, Mr. Vincent—when he'll not take no pains to keep things square? I'm speaking plain, for you can't mistake me as it's anything but your own interests I am a-thinking of. We was all marching in, deacons and committee and all, to say as we was grateful to you for your instructions, and wishing you well out of your trouble—and I was in great hopes as matters might have been made up—when behold, what we finds was the vestry empty and the pastor gone! Now, I aint a-finding fault. Them news would explain anything; but I don't deny as Pigeon and the rest was put out; and if you'll be guided by me, Mr. Vincent, when you've done our business as is most important of all, you'll go and make some visits, sir, and make yourself agreeable, if you'll excuse me. It aint with no selfish thoughts as I speak," said Tozer, energetically; "it's not like asking of you to come a-visiting to me, nor setting myself forward as the minister's great friend—though we *was* remarking as the pastor was unknown in our house this fortnight and more—but it's for peace and union, Mr. Vincent, and the good of the flock, sir, and to keep—as your good mother well knows aint easy in a congregation—all things straight."

When this little peroration was delivered, Vincent was seated at table, making what he could of the breakfast, in which both his

mother and Tozer had interested themselves. It was with a little effort that the young man accepted this advice as the character and intentions of his adviser deserved. He swallowed what was unpalatable in the counsel, and received the suggestion "in as sweet a frame of mind as I could wish to see," as Tozer afterwards described.

"I will go and make myself agreeable," said the young minister, with a smile. "Thank Heaven! it is not so impossible to-day as it might have been yesterday; I left the chapel so hurriedly, because—"

"I understand, sir," said Tozer, benevolently interposing as Vincent paused, finding explanation impossible. "Pigeon and the rest was put out, as I say, more nor I could see was reasonable—not as Pigeon is a man that knows his own mind. It's the women as want the most managing. Now, Mr. Vincent, I'm ready, sir, if you are, and we wont lose no time."

Before going out, however, Vincent went to his sister's room. She was lying in an utter quietness which went to his heart;—silent, no longer uttering the wild fancies of a disordered brain, recovering, as the doctor thought; but stretched upon her white couch, marble white, without any inclination apparently to lift the heavy lids of her eyes, or to notice anything that passed before her—a very sad sight to see. By her sat her mother, in a very different condition, anxious, looking into Arthur's eyes, whispering counsels in his ears. "O my dear boy, be very careful," said Mrs. Vincent; "your dear papa always said that a minister's flock was his first duty; and now that Susan is getting better, O Arthur! you must not let people talk about your sister—and have patience, oh, have patience, dear!" This was said in wisful whispers, with looks which only half confided in Arthur's prudence; and the widow sank into her chair when he left her, folding her hands in a little agony of self-restraint and compulsory quietness. She felt equal for it herself, if she had been at liberty to go out upon the flock once more in Arthur's cause; but who could tell how he might commit himself, he who was a young man, and took his own way, and did not know, as Tozer said, how to keep all things straight? When Mrs. Vincent thought of her son in personal conflict with Mrs. Pigeon, she lost faith in Arthur. She her-

self might have conquered that difficult adversary, but what weapons had he to bring forth against the deacon's wife, he who was only a minister and a man?

CHAPTER XXXI.

"AND now that's settled as far as we can settle it now," said Tozer, as they left the magistrate's office, where John Brown, the famous Carlingsford solicitor, had accompanied them, "you'll go and see some of the chapel folks, Mr. Vincent? It'll be took kind of you to lose no time, especially if you'd say a word just as it's all over, and let them know the news is true."

"I will go with you first," said Vincent, who contemplated the butterman's shop at that moment through little halo of gratitude and kindness. He went in to the back parlor with the gratified deacon, where Mrs. Tozer sat reading over again the same *Gazette* in which poor Susan's history was summed up and ended. It seemed like a year to Vincent since he had dined with his mother at this big table, amid the distant odors of all the bacon and cheese. Mrs. Tozer put down the paper, and took off her spectacles as her visitor came in. "It's Mr. Vincent, Phœbe," she said, with a little exclamation. "Dear, dear, I never thought as the pastor would be such a strange sight in my house—not as I was meaning nothing unkind, Tozer, so there's no occasion to look at me. I'm as glad as ever I can be to see the minister; and what a blessing as it's all settled, and the poor dear getting well too. Phœbe, you needn't be a-hiding behind me, chid, as if the pastor was thinking of how you was dressed. She has on her morning wrapper, Mr. Vincent, as she was helping her mother in, and we didn't expect no visitors. Don't be standing there, as if it was any matter to the minister how you was dressed."

"O ma, as if I ever thought of such a thing!" said Phœbe, extending a pink uncovered arm out of the loose sleeve of her morning-dress to Vincent, and averting her face; "but to see Mr. Vincent is so like old times—and everything *has* seemed so different—and it *is* so pleasant to feel as if it were all coming back again. O ma, to imagine that I ever supposed Mr. Vincent could notice my dress, or think of poor me!" added Phœbe, in a postscript under her breath. The minister heard the latter

words quite as well as the first. After he had shaken the pink, plump hand, he sat down on the opposite side of the table, and saw Phœbe, relieved against the light of the window, wiping a tender tear from her eye. All at once out of the darker and heavier trials which had abstracted him from common life, the young Nonconformist plunged back into the characteristic troubles of his position. As usual, he made no response to Phœbe, found nothing civil to say, but turned with desperation to Mrs. Tozer, who was luckily about to speak.

"Don't pay no attention to her, Mr. Vincent; she's a deal too feelin'. She oughtn't to be minded, and then she'll learn better," said Mrs. Tozer. "I am sure it wasn't no wish of ours as you should ever stop away. If we had been your own relations we couldn't have been more took up; and where should a minister seek for sympathy if it isn't in his own flock? There aint nobody so safe to put your trust in, Mr. Vincent, as Salem folks. There's a many fine friends a young man may have when he's in a prosperous way, but it aint to be supposed they would stand by him in trouble; and it's them as you find the good of your real friends," continued Mrs. Tozer, looking with some significance at her husband. Tozer, for his own part, rubbed his hands and stationed himself with his back to the fire, as is the custom of Englishmen of all degrees. The husband and wife contemplated Vincent with complacence. With the kindest feelings in the world, they could not altogether restrain a little triumph. It was impossible now that the minister could mistake who were his true friends.

But just then, strangely enough, a vision of a tender smile, a glance up in his face, the touch of a soft hand, came to Vincent's mind. His fine friends! he had but one, and she had stood by him in his trouble. From Tozer's complacence the minister's mind went off with a bound of relief to that sweet, fruitless sympathy which was dearer than help. From her soft, perfumy presence to Mrs. Tozer's parlor, with that pervading consciousness in it of the shop hard by and its store of provisions, what a wonderful difference! It was not so easy to be grateful as he had at first thought.

"Mr. Tozer has been my real friend indeed, and a most honest and thorough one,"

said Vincent. "But I don't think I have any other in Salem so sure and steady," added the minister, after a little pause, half gratefully, half in bitterness. This sentiment was not, however, resented by the assembled family. Phœbe leaned over her mother's chair, and whispered, "O ma, dear! didn't I always say he was full of feeling?" somewhat to the discomfiture of the person commented on; while Tozer himself beamed upon the minister from before the blazing fire.

"I said as we'd pull you through," said Tozer, "and I said as I'd stand by you; and both I'll do, sir, you take my word, if you'll but stick to your duty; and as for standing bail in a hundred pound or two," continued the buttermen, magnanimously, "for a poor young creature as couldn't be nothing but innocent, I don't mind that, nor a deal more than that, to keep all things straight. It's nothing but my duty. When a man is a responsible man, and well known in a place, it's his business to make use of his credit, Mr. Vincent, sir, and his character for the good of his friends."

"It may be your duty, but you know there aint a many as would have done it," said his straightforward wife, "as Mr. Vincent sees himself, and no need for nobody a-telling of him. There aint a many as would have stood up for the pastor, right and wrong, and finished off with the likes of this, and the minister don't need us to say so. Dear, dear, Mr. Vincent, you aint a-going away already, and us hasn't so much as seen you for I can't tell how long? I made sure you'd stop and take a bit of dinner at least, not making no ceremony," said Mrs. Tozer, "for there's always enough for a friend, and you can't take us wrong."

Vincent had risen hurriedly to his feet, under the strong stimulant of the buttermen's self-applause. Conscious as he was of all that Tozer had really done, the minister found it hard to listen and echo, with due humility and gratitude, the perfect satisfaction of the pair over their own generosity. He had no thanks to say when thus fore stalled. "O ma, how can you make so much of it?" cried Phœbe. "The minister will think us *so* selfish; and, oh, please, Mr. Vincent, when you go home, will you speak to your mother, and ask her to let me come and help with her nursing? I should do what-

ever she told me, and try to be a comfort to her—oh, I should indeed," said Phœbe, clasping those pink hands. "Nobody could be more devoted than I should be." She cast down her eyes, and stood the image of maidenly devotedness between Vincent and the window. She struck him dumb, as she always did. He never was equal to the emergency where Phœbe was concerned. He took up his hat in his hands, and tried to explain lamely how he must go away—how he had visits to make—duties to do—and would have stuck fast, and lost Mrs. Tozer's favor finally and forever, had not the buttermen interposed.

"It's me as is to blame," said the worthy deacon. "If it hadn't have been as the pastor wouldn't pass the door without coming in, I'd not have had him here to-day; and if you women would think, you'd see. We're stanch—and Mr. Vincent aint no call to trouble himself about us; but Pigeon and them, you see, as went off in a huff yesterday—that's what the minister has got to do. You sha'n't be kep' no longer, sir, in my house. Duty afore pleasure, that's my maxim. Good-mornin', and I hope as you wont meet with no unpleasantries; but if you should, Mr. Vincent, don't be disheartened, sir—we'll pull you through."

With this encouraging sentiment, Vincent was released from Mrs. Tozer's parlor. He drew a long breath when he got out to the fresh air in the street, and faced the idea of the Pigeons and other recusants whom he was now bound to visit. While he thought of them, all so many varieties of Mrs. Tozer's parlor, without the kindness which met him there, the heart of the young Nonconformist failed him. Nothing but gratitude to Tozer could have sent him forth at all on this mission of conciliation; but now on the threshold of it, smarting from even Tozer's well-intentioned patronage, a yearning for a little personal comfort seized upon Vincent's mind. It was his duty to go away towards Grove Street, where the poultreer's residence was; but his longing eyes strayed towards Grange Lane, where consolation dwelt. And, besides, was it not his duty to watch over the real criminal, for whose mysterious wickedness poor Susan had suffered? It was not difficult to foresee how that argument would conclude. He wavered for a few minutes opposite Masters' shop, gave a furtive glance back towards the buttermen's, and then, starting forward with sudden resolution, took his hasty way to Lady Western's door; only for a moment; only to see that all was safe, and his prisoner still in custody. Vincent sighed over the thought with an involuntary quickening of his heart. To be detained in such custody, the young man thought, would

be sweeter than heaven ; and the wild hope which came and went like a meteor about his path, sprang up with sudden intensity, and took the breath from his lips, and the color from his cheek, as he entered at that green garden door.

Lady Western was by herself in the drawing-room—that room divided in half by the closed doors which Vincent remembered so well. She rose up out of the low chair in which she reposed, like some lovely swan amid billows of dark silken drapery, and held out her beautiful hand to him—both her beautiful hands—with an effusion of kindness and sympathy. The poor young Nonconformist took them into his own, and forgot the very existence of Salem. The sweetness of the moment took all the sting out of his fate. He looked at her without saying anything, with his heart in his eyes. Consolation ! It was all he had come for. He could have gone away thereafter and met all the Pigeons in existence ; but more happiness still was in store for him—she pointed to a chair on the other side of her work-table. There was nobody else near to break the charm. The silken rustle of her dress, and that faint perfume which she always had about her pervaded the rosy atmosphere. Out of purgatory, out of bitter life beset with trouble, the young man had leaped for one moment into paradise ; and who could wonder that he resigned himself to the spell ?

"I am so glad you have come," said Lady Western. "I am sure you must have hated me, and everything that recalled my name ; but it was impossible for any one to be more grieved than I was, Mr. Vincent. Now, will you tell me about Rachel ? She sits by herself in her own room. When I go in she gives me a look of fright which I cannot understand. Fright ! Can you imagine Rachel frightened, Mr. Vincent—and of me ?"

"Ah, yes. I would not venture to come into the presence of the angels if I had guilt on my hands," said Vincent, not very well knowing what he said.

"Mr. Vincent ! what can you mean ? You alarm me very much," said the young Dowager ; "but perhaps it is about her little girl. I don't think she knows where her daughter is. Indeed," said Lady Western, with a cloud on her beautiful face, "you must not think I ever approved of my brother's conduct ; but when he was so anxious to have his child, I think she might have given in to him a little—don't you think so ? The child might have done him good perhaps. She is very lovely, I hear. Did you see her ? O Mr. Vincent, tell me about it. I cannot understand how you are connected with it all. She trusted in you so much, and now she is afraid of you. Tell me how

it is. Hush ! she is ringing her bell. She has seen you come into the house."

"But I don't want to see Mrs.—Mrs. Mildmay," said Vincent, rising up. "I don't know why I came at all, if it were not to see the sun shining. It is dark down below where I am," said the young man, with an involuntary outburst of the passion which at that moment suddenly appeared to him in all its unreasonableness. "Forgive me. It was only a longing I had to see the light."

Lady Western looked up with her sweet eyes in the minister's face. She was not ignorant of the condition of mind he was in, but she was sorry for him to the bottom of her heart. To cheer him a little could not harm any one. "Come back soon," she said, again holding out her hand with a smile. "I am *so* sorry for your troubles ; and if we can do anything to comfort you, come back soon again, Mr. Vincent." When the poor Nonconformist came to himself after these words, he was standing outside the garden door, out of paradise, his heart throbbing, and his pulse beating in a kind of sweet delirium. In that very moment of delight he recognized, with a thrill of exaltation and anguish, the madness of his dream. No matter. What if his heart broke after ? Now, at least, he could take the consolation. But if it was hard to face Mrs. Pigeon before, it may well be supposed that it was not easy now, with all this world of passionate fancies throbbing in his brain, to turn away from his elevation and encounter Salem and its irritated deacons. Vincent went slowly up Grange Lane, trying to make up his mind to his inevitable duty. When he was nearly opposite the house of Dr. Marjoribanks, he paused to look back. The garden door was again open, and somebody else was going into the enchanted house. Somebody else ; —a tall, slight figure, in a loose, light-colored dress, which he recognized instinctively with an agony of jealous rage. A minute before he had allowed to himself, in an exquisite despair, that to hope was madness ; but the sight of his rival awoke other thoughts in the mind of the minister. With quick eyes he identified the companion of his midnight journey—he in whose name all Susan's wretchedness had been wrought—he whom Lady Western could trust "with life—to death." Vincent went back at the sight of him, and found the door now close shut, through which his steps had passed. Close shut—enclosing the other—shutting him out in the cold external gloom. He forgot all he had to do for himself and his friends—he forgot his duty, his family, everything in the world but hopeless love and passionate jealousy, as he paced up and down before Lady Western's door.

From The North British Review.

1. *Essays from "The Quarterly Review."* By James Hannay. London: Hurst and Blackett. 1861.
2. *Nugæ Criticæ: Occasional Papers written at the Seaside.* By Shirley. Edmonston and Douglas, Edinburgh. 1862.
3. *The Recreations of a Country Parson.* (A.K.H.B.) London: John W. Parker and Son, West Strand. 1859.
4. *Leisure Hours in Town.* By the Author of "Recreations of a Country Parson." London: John W. Parker and Son, West Strand. 1862.
5. *Essays in History and Art.* By R. H. Patterson. William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London. 1862.
6. *Essays, Historical and Critical.* By Hugh Miller. A. and C. Black, Edinburgh. 1862.

EVERY now and again it is asserted that our literature is being destroyed by the periodicals. Some hold that, under their baneful influence, we are losing all concision and polish of style, as well as all capacity for serious thought. Others, admitting that there may be as much intellectual wealth current now as there was forty or a hundred years ago, contend that as the intellectual wealth of the former time was represented by a thousand gold coins, and the wealth of the present day by a million copper ones, the unprecedented distribution of pieces, the sordid material of which they are composed, the excess of bulk and weight, form serious deductions from the value actually in possession. The assertion that magazines and reviews are at present hurting literature, is one which, in virtue of being half truth and half falsehood, is likely to enjoy a long life. You cannot trample it quite out, on account of the truth resident in it; you have an uneasy suspicion of its falsehood even while asserting it most loudly. Every household in the country has its periodical. Henry of Navarre longed for the time when every Frenchman should have a hen in his pot. That he conceived a better sign of the prosperity of country than certain big feasts in certain big castles. The magazines bring literature into every home, just as aqueduct and pipe bring the water of Loch Katrine into the homes of the Glasgow citizens. It is quite true, that the water occasionally tastes of iron, and wears a rusty stain; quite true that a perfectly pure draught may always be had at the legendary lake in the

shadow of the hills; but the water is flowing in every house, and that, after all, is the important matter.

And, to carry out the illustration, the water is often as pure in the basin of the citizen as beneath the trembling sedges that the wild duck loves. The fact that so many of our books, and so many of our best books too, are reprints from periodicals, proves that not only are periodicals extensively read, but that they absorb much of our best thinking and writing. The best-written magazine naturally attracts the largest number of readers; and this number of readers enables it to maintain its level of excellence, and to draw to its service the best men who may from time to time arise. When we say that our best periodicals are extensively read, we are simply saying that our best periodicals are attractive. No man who wishes to be amused will pay his money for dulness. No man who appreciates style will habitually peruse what cannot minister to his literary delight. The people who purchase the *Cornhill* may be presumed to be tolerably contented with the literature of the *Cornhill*. Their ordinary thinking is not quite up to the level of the thinking of the writers in that serial; the articles it contains occasionally present them with a new fact, or with a new view of a fact already known; and their ordinary conversation or correspondence does not exhibit the play of fancy and aptness of illustration which distinguish the writings of Mr. Thackeray and Mr. Lewes. So long as periodicals are read, we assume that they serve a very important purpose—that they amuse, instruct, and refine. Whenever they cease to do so, they will die as the annuals did. Nor does this same literature affect writers in any very disastrous way. It is frequently said that periodical writing fritters away a man's intellectual energy—that, instead of concentrating himself on some congenial task, devoting a whole lifetime to it, and leaving it as a permanent possession of the race, a man is tempted to write hastily and without sufficient meditation; that in fact we have articles now, more or less brilliant, whereas, under different circumstances, we might have had books. All this kind of conjecture is exceedingly unprofitable. Doubtless, under different circumstances, the results of a man's working would have been different

more or less; but it does not of necessity follow that the results would have been more valuable. A man's power in literature, as in everything else, is best measured by his accomplishment, just as his stature is best measured by his coffin. The man who can beat his fellows in a ten-mile race, is likely to maintain his superiority in a race for a shorter distance. It is a mistake to suppose that a man's largest work, or the work on which he has expended the greatest labor, is on that account his best. Literary history is full of instances to the contrary. When mental power is equal, that is surest of immortality which occupies the least space; scattered forces are then concentrated, like garden roses gathered into one bouquet, or English beauty in the boxes at the opera. Leisure and life-long devotion to a task have often resulted in tediousness. Large works are often too heavy for posterity to carry. We have too many "Canterbury Tales." The "Faery Queen" would be more frequently read if it consisted of only one book, and Spenser's fame would stand quite as high. Milton's poetical genius is as apparent in "Comus" and "Lycidas" as in his great Epic, which most people have thought too long. Addison's "Essay in Westminster Abbey" is more valuable than his tragedy. Macaulay's Essays on Clive and Warren Hastings are as brilliant, powerful, and instructive as any single chapter of his "History"—with the additional advantage that they can be read at a sitting. Certain readers have been found to admire Wordsworth's "We are Seven" more than the "Excursion." Coleridge talked of spending fifteen years on the construction of a great poem; had he done so, it is doubtful whether his reader would have preferred it to the "Ancient Mariner." From all this it may be inferred that if writers, instead of "frittering themselves away" in periodicals, had devoted themselves to the production of important works, the world would not have been much the wiser, and their reputations not one whit higher. Besides, there are many men more brilliant than profound, who have more *élan* than persistence, who gain their victories, like the Zouaves, by a rapid dash; and these do their best in periodicals. These the immediate presence of the reader excites, as the audience the orator, the crowded

pit the actor. Jerrold sparkles like a firefly through the tropic night; Hood, in that tragic subject which his serious fancy loved, emits like the glowworm a melancholy ray. But they could not shine for any continuous period, and had the wisdom not to attempt it. Are they to blame that they did not write long books to prove themselves dull fellows? It is of no use to cry out against the present state of things in literature. The magazines are here, and they have been produced by a great variety of causes. They demand certain kinds of literary wares; but whether the wares are valuable or the reverse, depends entirely upon the various workmen. It is to be hoped, if magazine writers possess a specialty, that they will stick to their specialty, and work it out faithfully—that no one will go out of his way, like Mr. Dickens, when he wrote "The Child's History of England," or Mr. Ruskin, when he addressed himself to the discussion of questions in political economy.

To the young writer, the magazine or review has many advantages. In many instances he can serve in the house of a literary noble, as the squire in the fourteenth century served in the house and under the eye of the territorial noble. He may model himself on an excellent pattern, and receive knighthood from his master as the reward of good conduct. If otherwise circumstanced,—if, following no special banner, he writes under the cover of the anonymous, and if unsuccessful,—he may retire without being put to public shame. In the arena of the magazines he can try his strength, pit himself against his fellows, find out his intellectual weight and power, gradually beget confidence in himself or arrive at the knowledge of his weakness,—a result not less valuable if more rarely acquired. If he is overthrown in the lists, no one but himself is the worse; if he distinguishes himself, it is a little unreasonable to expect him to keep his visor down when roses are showering upon him from applauding balconies. A man eminently successful in the magazines may fairly be forgiven for rushing to a reprint. Actors who make a hit at Drury Lane, almost immediately make a tour of the provinces. A reprint is to the author what a provincial tour is to the actor. If he is an amusing writer, people welcome him in his new shape with the gratitude

which people always entertain for those who have amused them ; if he is a great writer, people desire to shake hands with him, as the elector is proud to shake hands with the candidate whom he has elected as his representative. And, indeed, the magazinists may fairly be compared to the House of Commons,—a mixed audience, representing every class, stormy, tumultuous, where great questions are being continually discussed ; an assembly wherein men rise to be leaders of parties ; out of which men are selected to rule distant provinces ;—out of which also, every now and again, a member is translated to the Upper House, where he takes his seat among his peers, in a serener atmosphere, and among loftier traditions.

During the last year or two, there has been a large number of reprints from the magazines, consisting chiefly of essays and novels. With the latter at present we have no concern. The essay has always been a favorite literary form with magazine writers ; and in the volumes before us we have specimens of various kinds. Of the most delightful kind of essay-writing, that of personal delineation, which chronicles moods, which pursues vagrant lines of thought, Montaigne is the earliest, and as yet the greatest example. Montaigne is as egotistical in his essays as a poet is in his lyrics. His subject is himself, his thinkings, his surroundings of every kind. He did not write to inform us about the events of his own time, though it was stirring enough ; about his contemporaries, although he mingled much in society, and knew the best men of his day ; about the questions which stirred the hearts and perplexed the intellects of the sixteenth-century Frenchmen, although he was familiar with them all, and had formed opinions ;—these he puts aside, to discourse of his chateau, his page, his perfumed gloves ;—to discuss love, friendship, experience, and the like, in his own way, half in banter, half in earnest. Consequently we have the fullest information regarding himself, if we have but little regarding anything else. Of course essays written after this fashion cannot, from the very nature of them, be expected to shape themselves on any established literary form. They do not require to have a middle, beginning, or end. They are a law unto themselves. They are shaped by impulse and

whim, as emotion shapes the lyric. Montaigne wanders about at his own will, and has as many jerks and turnings as a swallow on the wing. He seems to have the strangest notions of continuity, and sometimes his titles have no relation to his subject-matter, and look as oddly at the top of his page as the sign-board of the Bible-merchant over the door of a lottery office. He assails miracles in his "Essay on Cripples," and he wanders into the strangest regions in his essay "Upon some Verses of Virgil." In his most serious moods he brings illustrations from the oddest quarters, and tells such stories as we might suppose Squire Western to have delighted in, sitting with a neighboring squire over wine, after his sister and Sophia had withdrawn. These essays, full of the keenest insight, the profoundest melancholy, continually playing with death as Hamlet plays with Yorick's skull, whimsical, humorous, full of the flavor of a special character,—philosopher and eccentric Gascon gentleman in one,—are, in the best sense of the term, artistic. There is a meaning in the trifling, wisdom in the seeming folly, a charm in the swallow-like gyrations. All the incongruous elements,—the whimsicality and the worldly wisdom, the melancholy, the humor and sense of enjoyment, the trifling over articles of attire and details of personal habit, the scepticism which questioned everything, the piety and the coarseness,—mix and mingle somehow, and become reconciled in the alembic of personal character. Oppositions, incongruities, contradictions, taken separately, are mere lines and scratches ; when brought together, by some mysterious attraction they unite to produce a grave and thoughtful countenance—that of Montaigne. He explains the essays, the essays explain him. Of course the writer's remoteness from the great French world, his freedom from the modern conditions of publication and criticism, his sense of distance from his reader—if ever he should possess one—contributed, to a large extent, to make himself his own audience. He wrote as freely in his chateau at Montaigne, as Alexander Selkirk could have done in his solitary island. Had there been upon him the sense of a reading public and of critical eyes, he could not have delivered himself up so completely into the guidance of whim. As it is, the essays remain among

the masterpieces of the world. He is the first of egotists, because, while continually writing about himself, he was writing about what was noble and peculiar. No other literary egotist had ever so good a subject, and then his style is peculiar as himself. In his essays he continually piques the reader; every now and then more is meant than meets the eye; every now and then a great deal less. He plays at hide-and-seek with his reader round his images and illustrations. In reading Montaigne, we are always thinking we are finding him out.

When the essay became a popular literary form in England, the conditions of things had altogether changed since Montaigne's day. The Frenchman was a solitary man, with but few books except the classics, given to self-communion, constantly writing to please himself, constantly mastered by whim, constantly, as it were, throwing the reins upon the neck of impulse. He had no public, and consequently he did not stand in awe of one. The country was convulsed, martyrs were consumed at the stake, country houses were sacked, the blood of St. Bartholomew had been spilt, the white plume of Navarre was shining in the front of battle. Amid all this strife and turmoil, the melancholy and middle-aged gentleman sat in his chateau at Montaigne, alone with his dreams. No one disturbed him; he disturbed no one. He lived for himself and for thought. When Steele and Addison appeared as English essayists, they appeared under totally different circumstances. The four great English poets had lived and died. The Elizabethan drama, which had arisen in Marlow, had set in Shirley. The comedy of Wicherley and Congreve, in which prurience had become phosphorescent, was in possession of the stage. Dryden had taken immortal vengeance on his foes. Fragments of Butler's wit sparkled like grains of salt in the conversation of men of fashion. English literature was already rich; there was a whole world of books and of accumulated ideas to work upon. Then a public had arisen; there was the "town," idle, rich, eagerly inquiring after every new thing, most anxious to be amused. Montaigne was an egotist, because he had little but himself to write about; certainly he had nothing nearly so interesting. He pursued his speculations as he liked, because he had no one

to interfere with him. He was actor and audience in one. The English essayists, on the other hand, had the English world to act upon. They had its leisure to amuse, its follies to satirize; its books, music, and pictures, its public amusements, its whole social arrangements, to comment upon, to laugh at, to praise. As a consequence their essays are not nearly so instructive as Montaigne's, although they are equally sparkling and amusing. We are introduced into a fashionable world, to beaux with rapiers and lace ruffles, and belles with patches on their cheeks; there are drums and card-tables, and sedan chairs and links. The satire in the *Spectator* is conventional; it concerns itself with the circumference of a lady's hoops, or the air with which a coxcomb carries his cocked hat beneath his arm. The essayists of the eighteenth century were satirists of society, and of that portion of society alone which sneered in the coffee-houses and buzzed round the card-tables of the metropolis. They did not deal with crimes, but with social foibles; they did not recognize passions in that fashionable world; they did not reverence women, they took off their hats and uttered sparkling compliments to the "fair." Theirs was a well-dressed world, and they liked it best when seen by candle-light. They were fine gentlemen, and they carried into literature the fine-gentleman airs. They dressed carefully, and they were as careful of the dress of their thoughts as of their persons. Their epigram was sharp and polished as their rapiers; they said the bitterest things in the most smiling way; their badinage was gentlemanly. Satire went about with a colored plume of fancy in his cap. They brought style to perfection. But even then one could see that a change was setting in. A poor gentleman down at Olney, under the strong power of the world to come, was feeding his hares, and writing poems of a religious cast, yet with a wonderful fascination, as of some long-forgotten melody, haunting their theological peculiarities, which drew many to listen. Up from Ayrshire to Edinburgh came Burns, with black piercing eyes, with all his songs about him, as if he had left a county of the music of its groves; in due time a whole wild Paris was yelling round the guillotine where noble heads were falling. Europe became a battle-field; a

new name rose into the catalogue of kings ; and when the essayists of our own century began to write, the world had changed, and they had changed with it.

The essayists who wrote in the early portion of the present century — Lamb, Hazlitt, and Hunt — are not only different from their predecessors, as regards mental character ; they differ from them also in the variety of the subjects that engaged their attention. And this difference arises not only from the greater number of subjects attracting public interest in their day, but also from the immensely larger audience they had to address. They were not called upon to write for the town, but for town and country both. Society was reading in all its ranks, and each rank had its special interests. The essayists' subject-matter had been vastly enlarged, great actors had trod the boards, great painters had painted, the older poets had come into fashion, outside nature had again reappeared in literature. The essayist could weave an allegory, or criticise, or describe, or break a social enormity on the wheel, or explode an ancient prejudice, with the certainty of always finding a reader. Lamb, the most peculiarly gifted of the three—who thought Fleet Street worth all Arcadia—confined himself for the most part to the metropolis, its peculiar sights, its beggars, its chimney-sweeps, its theatres, its old actors, its book-stalls ; and on these subjects he discourses with pathos and humor curiously blended. For him the past had an irresistible attraction : he loved old books, old houses, old pictures, old wine, old friends. His mind was like a Tudor mansion, full of low-roofed, wainscoted rooms, with pictures on the walls of men and women in antique garb ; full of tortuous passages and grim crannies in which ghosts might lurk ; with a garden with plots of shaven grass, and processions of clipped yews, and a stone dial in the corner, with a Latin motto anent the flight of time carved upon it, and a drowsy sound of rooks heard sometimes from afar. He sat at the India House with the heart of Sir Thomas Browne beating beneath his sables. He sputtered out puns among his friends from the saddest heart. He laughed that he might not weep. Misery, which could not make him a cynic nor a misanthrope, made him a humorist. And knowing, as now we all know from Sergeant

Talfourd, the tragic shadow which darkened his home for years, one looks upon the portrait of Elia with pity tempered with awe. Lamb extended the sphere of the essay, not so much because he dealt with subjects which till his day had been untouched, but because he imported into that literary form a fancy humor and tenderness which resembled the fancy humor and tenderness of no other writer. The manifestations of these qualities were as personal and peculiar as his expression of countenance, the stutter in his speech, his habit of punning, his love of black-letter and whiskey-punch. His essays are additions to English literature, just as Potosi silver was an addition to the wealth of Europe—something which it did not previously possess. Whatever his subject, it becomes interpenetrated by his pathetic and fanciful humor, and is thereby etherealized, made poetic. Some of his essays have all the softness and remoteness of dreams. They are not of the earth earthy. They are floating islands asleep on serene shadows in a sea of humor. The essay on Roast Pig breathes a divine aroma. The sentences hush themselves around the youthful chimney-sweep, “the innocent blackness,” asleep in the nobleman’s sheets, as they might around the couch of the sleeping princess. Gone are all his troubles,—the harsh call of his master, sooty knuckle rubbed into tearful eyes, his brush, his call from the chimney-top. Let the poor wretch sleep ! And then, Lamb’s method of setting forth his fancies is as peculiar as the fancies themselves. He was a modern man only by the accident of birth ; and his style is only modern by the same accident. It is full of the quaintest convolutions and doublings back upon itself ; and ever and again a paragraph is closed by a sentence of unexpected rhetorical richness, like heavy golden fringe depending from the velvet of the altar cover, —a trick which he learned from the “Religio Medici,” and the “Urn Burial.” As a critic, too, Lamb takes a high place. His essay on the Genius of Hogarth is a triumphant vindication of that master’s claim to the highest place of honor in British art ; and in it he sets forth the doctrine, that a picture must not be judged by externals of color, nor by manipulative dexterity—valuable as these unquestionably are—but by the number and value of the thoughts it con-

tains; a doctrine which Mr. Ruskin has borrowed, and has used with results.

Leigh Hunt was a poet as well as an essayist, and he carried his poetic fancy with him into prose, where it shone like some splendid bird of the tropics among the sober-coated denizens of the farmyard. He loved the country; but one almost suspects that his love for the country might be resolved into likings for cream, butter, strawberries, sunshine, and hay-swathe to tumble in. If he did not, like Wordsworth, carry in his heart the silence of wood and fell, he at all events carried a gillyflower jauntily in his button-hole. He was neither a town poet and essayist, nor a country poet and essayist; he was a mixture of both,—a suburban poet and essayist. Above all places in the world, he loved Hampstead. His essays are gay and cheerful as suburban villas,—the piano is touched within, there are trees and flowers outside, but the city is not far distant; prosaic interests are ever intruding, visitors are constantly dropping in. His essays are not poetically conceived; they deal—with the exception of that lovely one on the "Death of Little Children," where the fancy becomes serious as an angel, and wipes the tears of mothers as tenderly away as an angel could—with distinctly mundane and commonplace matters; but his charm is this, be the subject what it may, immediately troops of fancies search land and sea and the range of the poets for its adornment—just as, in the old English villages on May morning, shoals of rustics went forth to the woods and brought home hawthorns for the dressing of door and window. Hunt is always cheerful and chatty. He defends himself against the evils of life with pretty thoughts. He believes that the world is good, and that men and women are good too. He would, with a smiling face, have offered a flower to a bailiff in the execution of his duty, and been both hurt and astonished if that functionary had proved dead to its touching suggestions. His essays are much less valuable than Lamb's, because they are neither so peculiar, nor do they touch the reader so deeply; but they are full of color and wit. They resemble the arbors we see in gardens,—not at all the kind of place one would like to spend a life-time in, but exceedingly pleasant to withdraw to for an hour when the sun is hot and no duty is

pressing. He called one of his books, "A Book for the Parlor Window;" all his books are for the parlor window.

Hazlitt, if he lacked Lamb's quaintness and ethereal humor, and Hunt's fancifulness, possessed a robust and passionate faculty which gave him a distinct place in the literature of his time. His feelings were keen and deep. The French Revolution seemed to him—in common with Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge—in its early stages an authentic angel rising with a new morning for the race upon its forehead; and when disappointment came, and when his friends sought refuge in the old order of things, he, loyal to his youthful hope, stood aloof, hating them almost as renegades; and never ceasing to give utterance to his despair: "I started in life with the French Revolution," he tells us; "and I have lived, alas! to see the end of it. My sun arose with the first dawn of liberty, and I did not think how soon both must set. We were strong to run a race together, and I little dreamed that, long before mine was set, the sun of liberty would turn to blood, or sink once more in the night of despotism. Since then, I confess, I have no longer felt myself young, for with that my hopes fell." This was the central bitterness in Hazlitt's life; but around it were grouped lesser and more personal bitternesses. His early ambition was to be a painter, and in that he failed. Coleridge was the man whom he admired most in all the world, in whose genius he stood, like an Arcadian shepherd in an Arcadian sunrise, full of admiration,—every sense absorbed in that of sight; and that genius he was fated to see coming to nothing. Then he was headstrong, violent, made many enemies, was the object of cruel criticism, his financial affairs were never prosperous, and in domestic matters he is not understood to have been happy. He was a troubled and exasperated man, and this exasperation is continually breaking out in his writings. Deeply wounded in early life, he carried the smart with him to his death-bed. And in his essays and other writings it is almost pathetic to notice how he clings to the peaceful images which the poets love; how he reposes in their restful lines; how he listens to the bleating of the lamb in the fields of imagination. He is continually quoting Sidney's Arcadian image of the *shepherd-boy under*

the shade, piping as he would never grow old, —as if the recurrence of the image to his memory brought with it silence, sunshine, and waving trees. Hazlitt had a strong metaphysical turn; he was an acute critic in poetry and art, but he wrote too much, and he wrote too hurriedly. When at his best, his style is excellent, concise, sinewy, —laying open the stubborn thought as the sharp plowshare the glebe; while, at other times, it wants edge and sharpness, and the sentences resemble the impressions of a seal which has been blunted with too frequent use. His best essays are, in a sense, autobiographical, because in them he recalls his enthusiasms and the passionate hopes on which he fed his spirit. The essay entitled, "My First Acquaintance with Poets," is full of memorable passages. To Hazlitt, Coleridge was a divinity. They walked from Wem to Shrewsbury on a winter day, Coleridge talking all the while; and Hazlitt recalls it after the lapse of years: "A sound was in my ears as of a syren's song: I was stunned, startled with it as from deep sleep; but I had no notion then that I should ever be able to express my admiration to others in motley imagery and quaint allusion, till the light of his genius shone into my soul like the sun's rays glittering in the puddles of the road. . . . My soul has indeed remained in its original bondage,—dark, obscure, with longings infinite and unsatisfied; my heart, shut up in the prison-house of this rude clay, has never found, nor will it ever find, a heart to speak to; but that my understanding also did not remain dumb and brutish, or at length found a language to express itself, I owe to Coleridge." This testimony, from a man like Hazlitt, to the worth of Coleridge's talk is interesting, and contrasts strangely with Carlyle's description of it, when, in later years, the silvery-haired sage looked down on the smoky London from Highgate. Nor is it without its moral. Talk, which in his early day came like a dawn upon another mind, illuminating dark recesses, kindling intellectual life, revealing itself to itself,—became, through personal indulgence and the will's infirmity, mere glittering mists in which men were lost. Hazlitt's other essay, on the "Pleasures of Painting," is quite as personal as the one to which we have referred, and is perhaps the finest thing he has written. It is full of the love and the despair of art. He

tells how he was engaged for blissful days in painting a portrait of his father; how he imitated as best he could the rough texture of the skin, and the blood circulating beneath; how, when it was finished, he sat on a chair opposite, and with wild thoughts enough in his head, looked at it through the long evenings; how with a throbbing heart he sent it to the exhibition, and saw it hung up there by the side of a portrait "of the Honorable Mr. Skeffington (now Sir George)." Then he characteristically tells us, "that he finished the portrait on the same day that the news of the battle of Austerlitz came." "I walked out in the afternoon, and as I returned, saw the evening star set over a poor man's cottage, with other thoughts and feelings than I shall ever have again. Oh, for the revolution of the great Platonic year, that these times might come over again! I could sleep out the three hundred and sixty-five thousand intervening years very contentedly." He was a passionate, melancholy, keen-feeling, and disappointed man; and those portions of his essays are the least valuable where his passion and his disappointment break out into spleen or irritability, just as those portions are the most valuable where bitter feelings are transfused into poetry by memory and imagination. With perhaps more intellectual, certainly with more passionate force, than either Lamb or Hunt, Hazlitt's essays are, as a whole, inferior to theirs; but each contains passages, which not only they, but any man, might be proud to have written.

These men wrote in a period of unexampled literary activity, and in the thick of stupendous events: Scott, Moore, and Byron were writing their poems; Napoleon was shaking the thrones of the Continent. In our days the conquests of the poets seem nearly as astonishing as the conquests of the emperor. He passed from victory to victory, and so did they. When quieter days came, and when the great men of the former generation had either passed away, or were reposing on the laurels they had earned so worthily, other writers arose to sustain the glory of the English essay. The most distinguished were Lord Macaulay and Mr. Carlyle. They began to write about the same time; Lord Macaulay's Essay on Milton appearing in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1825, and Mr. Carlyle's first Essay on Jean

Paul Richter in the same Review in 1827. The writings of these men were different from their predecessors. Mr. Carlyle's primary object was to acquaint his countrymen with the great men which Germany had produced, and to interest them in the productions of German genius. His plans widened, however, as his way cleared; and the eye which looked into the heart of Goethe, Schiller, and Richter, was in course of time turned on the Scottish Burns, the English Johnson, and the French Voltaire. It is not too much to say that he has produced the best critical and biographical essays of which the English language can boast. And it is in the curious mixture of criticism and biography in these papers—for the criticism becomes biography, and the biography criticism—that their chief charm and value consist. Mr. Carlyle is an artist, and he knows exactly what and how much to put into his picture. He has a wonderful eye for what is characteristic. He searches after the secret of man's nature, and he finds it frequently in some trivial anecdote or careless saying, which another writer would have passed unnoticed, or tossed contemptuously aside. He hunts up every scrap of information, and he frequently finds what he wants in a corner. He judges a man by his poem, and the poem by the man. To his eye they are not separate things, but one and indivisible. A man's work is the lamp by which he reads his features. And then he so apportions praise and blame, so sets off the jocose and familiar with a moral solemnity, makes anecdote and detail of dress and allusion to personal grace or deformity, to subserve, by intricate suggestion, his ultimate purpose, and so presents to us life with eternity for background, that we not only feel that the picture is the actual presentation of the man as he lived,—a veritable portrait,—we feel also that he has worked in no light or careless mood, that the poorest life is serious enough when seen against eternity, and that we ourselves, however seldom we may remember it, are but momentary shadows projected upon it. Mr. Carlyle does not write "scoundrel" on one man's forehead, and "angel" on another's; he knows that pure scoundrel and pure angel have their dwellings in other places than earth; he is too cunning an artist to use these mercilessly definite lines. He works

by allusion, suggestion, light touches of fancy, spurts of humor, grotesque exaggerations of imagination; and these things so reduce one another, so tone one another down, that the final result is perfectly natural and homogeneous. It is only by some such combination of intellectual forces that you can shadow forth the complexity of life and character. In humanity there is no such thing as a straight line or an unmixed color. You see the flesh color on the cheek of a portrait: the artist will tell you that the consummately natural result was not attained by one wash of paint, but by the mixture and reduplication of a hundred tints, the play of a myriad lights and shadows, no one of which is natural in itself, although the blending of the whole is. These essays are the completest, the most characteristic portraits in our literature. Mr. Carlyle is always at home when his subject was man.

Lord Macaulay also wrote essays critical and biographical, and has been perhaps more widely popular than his great contemporary; but he is a different kind of thinker and writer altogether. He did not brood over the abysses of being as Mr. Carlyle continually does. The sense of time and death did not haunt him as they haunt the other. The world, as it figured itself to Lord Macaulay, was a comparatively commonplace world. He cared for man, but he cared for party quite as much. He recognized man as Whigs and Tories. His idea of the universe was a parliamentary one. His insight into man was not deep: he painted in positive colors; he is never so antithetical as when describing a character; and character, if properly conceived, sets the measured antitheses of the rhetorician at defiance. It is constantly eluding them. His criticism is good enough so far as it goes, but it does not go far; it deals more with the accidents than the realities of things. Lord Macaulay, as we have said, lived quite as much for party as for man; and the men who interested him were the men who were historical centres, around whom men and events revolved. He did not, as Mr. Carlyle often does, take hold of an individual—he does not care sufficiently for man for that—and view him against immensity; he takes a man and looks at him in connection with contemporary events. When he writes of Johnson, he is thinking all the while of

Goldsmith and Garrick and Boswell and Reynolds ; when he writes of Clive and Warren Hastings, he is more anxious to tell the story of their Indian conquests, than to enter into the secrets of their spirits. And for this, posterity are not likely to blame Lord Macaulay. He knew his strength. His pictorial faculty is astonishing : neither pomp nor circumstance cumbers it ; it moves along like a triumphal procession, which no weight of insignia and banner can oppress. Out of the past he selects some special drama, which is vivified and held together by the life of a single individual, and that he paints with his most brilliant colors. He is the creator of the Historical Essay, and in that department is not likely soon to have a successor. His unfinished History is only a series of historical pictures pieced together into one imposing panorama, but throughout there is wonderful splendor and pomp of color. Every figure, too, is finished, down to the buttons and the finger nails.

A generation has passed since Mr. Carlyle and Lord Macaulay wrote their essays, and during the interval new men have come into the field and won deserved laurels. "Notes from Life," by the author of "Philip Van Artevelde," is a volume every way remarkable. Mr. Taylor is a fine and thoughtful poet, and he has brought with him into the essay the poet's style and the poet's wisdom. In his essays you find no cheap and flashy sentiment, no running after the popular manias of the day ; the eye is never offended by a glare of color ; on the contrary, there is a certain ripeness about the thought as of autumn tints, a certain stillness and meditative repose as of an autumn evening, a certain remoteness and retiredness from modern strife and bustle, as of autumn woodlands. These essays are born of wisdom and experience, and of a wisdom and experience that has ripened in solitude and self-communion. No sound reaches you from the market-place — you cannot catch the tang of any literary coterie. The style, too, is peculiar in these days, from its leisurely movement and old-fashioned elaborateness. It has an Elizabethan air about it. It is far from being unornamented : the ornaments are worn proudly as heirlooms are worn, and these never glare — they are far too precious for that, in price of gold and gem and sacredness of memory,—and

are but seldom manufactured at Birmingham. The style has not been formed on the fluent and hasty moderns, but on Bacon and Jeremy Taylor, and such old men, and is about the best that has ever been written by poet.

Mr. Helps has the credit—apart from what may fairly attach to his exquisitely pellucid English, and the intrinsic value of his thinking—of introducing a novelty into essay-writing. Naturally subtle-minded and tolerant, most courteous to everything that comes to him in the name of truth, conscientious, disposed to listen to every witness, to hesitate and weigh, he does not take up an opinion suddenly ; and when he does take up one, he does not cling to it as a shipwrecked sailor to his raft, said raft being his only chance of escape from drowning. Superficially at least, an unimpassioned man, fond of limitations and of suggesting "butts," knowing that a good deal may not only be said on both sides but on a dozen sides of a thing, Mr. Helps, when he began to write, found himself environed with an artistic difficulty. He had, of course, on subjects in which he was interested, and which he wished to write about, certain definite opinions ; but as he was big enough and clear-eyed enough to see all round the matter in hand, he was conscious that each of the opinions, which he accepted as a whole, was subject to limitations, that each of them was intersected and eaten into by its opposite, like the map of Scotland by branching sea-lochs, and that if he gave expression to all his doubts and hesitations in the work of essay-writing he would make no sort of direct progress. He would only be painting above his picture. His one footprint would obliterate the other. And yet to be faithful to himself and to the work in hand, these limitations of broad statements must be indicated in some way. It is from this particular difficulty surrounding Mr. Helps that we are indebted for the machinery of the "Friends in Council." From the necessity which lay on him of setting forth in fulness his views of things, he was forced to the artistic device of creating around the central essay a little drama—of one character reading the essay which contains the broad view, and of other characters who listen and criticise, who suggest the subtle difficulty, point out the hazardous spot, define the inevitable limitation. By

this device the writer's subtlety has a field to display itself in, for the objections brought forward by the listeners are not men of straw, raised up for the purpose of being knocked down again ; they are other views of the central truth or opinion under discussion. The listeners do not argue, they converse amicably and thoughtfully. And more is gained than this : the author has an opportunity of introducing some admirably dramatic by-play—for Ellesmere, Dunsford, and Lucy really live—and although the subject under discussion may be as old as evil or ignorance itself, by letting in outside nature and English life upon it, the thinking is not only charmingly relieved, but it takes an essentially modern air. The subject may be old, but English gentlemen talk over it, and set forth their ideas of it from their peculiar points of view. By this method Mr. Helps is enabled to discuss his subject thoroughly, and to utter all that occurs to him of value. The essay which Melverton reads is a crystal, but by means of the other characters the crystal is held up towards the sun and turned slowly round, so that every facet catches the ray and flashes it back.

Considered as literary form, the essay is comparatively of late growth. The first literary efforts of a people consist of song and narrative. First comes the poet or minstrel, who sings heroic exploits, the strength and courage of heroes. These songs pass from individual to individual ; and are valuable not on account of the amount of historic truth, but of the amount of passion and imagery they contain. Explode tomorrow into mere myth and dream the incidents of the Iliad, and you do not affect in the slightest degree the literary merit of the poem. Still for all men, Achilles shouts in the trenches, Helen is beautiful, the towers of Ilium flame to heaven. Prove that Chevy Chase cannot in any one particular be considered a truthful relation of events, and you do it no special harm. It stirs the blood like a trumpet all the same. After the poet comes the prose narrator of events, who presents his facts peering obscurely through the mists of legends, but who has striven, as far as his ability extends, to tell us the truth. When he appears, the history of a nation has become extensive enough and important enough to awaken curiosity ; men are anxious to know how events did actually

occur, and what relation one event bears to another. When he appears, the national temper has cooled down—men no longer stand blinded by the splendors of sunrise. The sunrise has melted into the light of common day. The air has become emptied of wonder. The gods have deserted earth, and men only remain. Long after the poet and the historian comes the essayist. Before the stage is prepared for him, thought must have accumulated to a certain point, a literature less or more must be in existence, and must be preserved in printed books. Songs have been sung, histories and biographies have been written ; and to these songs, histories, and biographies he must have access. Then, before he can write, society must have formed itself, for in its complexity and contrasts he finds his food. Before the essayist can have free play, society must have existed long enough to have become self-conscious, introspective, to have brooded over itself and its perplexities, to have discovered its blots and weak points, to have become critical, and consequently appreciative of criticism. And as the essay does not, like the poem, or the early history or narration of events, appeal to the primitive feelings, before it can be read and enjoyed, there must exist a class who have attained wealth and leisure, and a certain acquaintance with the accumulated stores of thought on which the essayist works, else his allusions are lost, his criticism a dead letter, his satire pointless. All this takes a long time to accomplish, and it is generally late in the literary history of a country before its essayists appear. Then, the essay itself has its peculiar literary conditions. It bears the same relation to the general body of prose that the lyric bears to the general body of poetry. Like the lyric, it is brief ; and like the lyric, it demands a certain literary finish and perfection. In a long epic, the poet may now and then be allowed to nod ; in a history, it is not essential that every sentence should sparkle. But the essayist, from the very nature of his task, is not permitted to be dull or slovenly. He must be alert, full of intellectual life, concise, polished. He must think clearly, and express himself clearly. His style is as much an element of his success as his thought. The narrow limit in which he works demands this. In a ten-mile race it is not expected that the runners

shall go all the way at the top of their speed; in a race of three hundred yards it is not unreasonably expected that they shall do so. Then, besides all this, the essay must, as a basis or preliminary, be artistically conceived. It is neither a dissertation nor a thesis; properly speaking, it is a work of art, and must conform to artistic rules. It requires not only the intellectual qualities which we have indicated, but unity, wholeness, self-completion. In this it resembles a poem. It must hang together. It must round itself off into a separate literary entity. When finished, it must be able to sustain itself and live. The essayists of whom we have spoken fulfil these conditions more or less; and the measure of their fulfilment is the measure of success. These writers indicate in what directions the essay has manifested itself, and they may be roughly arranged in groups and clusters. There are the egotists—the most delightful of all—who choose for subject themselves, their surroundings, their moods and phantasies, whose charm consists not so much in the value or brilliancy of thought as in revelation of personal character: these are represented by Montaigne and Lamb; the satirists of society, manners, and social phenomena by Addison and Steele; the fanciful and ornamental essayists—they who wreath the human porch with the honeysuckles of poetry, by Hunt and by Hazlitt to some extent; the critical and biographical essay by Mr. Carlyle; the historical essay—the brilliant and many-colored picture of which some single man's life is the frame—by Lord Macaulay; the moral and didactic essay by Bacon in old time, and recently by Mr. Henry Taylor and Mr. Helps. Of course this is but an arrangement in the rough, and will not stand a too critical examination, for several of the writers mentioned belong now to one cluster and now to another; but it is sufficiently strict for our present purpose. Essay-writing is a craft vigorously prosecuted in England at present—witness the catalogue of recent books which head the present article—and generally the writers will be found to belong to one or other of the groups which we have indicated. It is our duty now to see of what stuff these men are made, and how as essayists they have acquitted themselves.

Mr. Hannay, whose "Essays from the *Quarterly*" appeared some eighteen months ago, has been before the world as a writer for twelve or fourteen years. Born among Galloway moors and moss bogs, where the shells of old fortresses yet stand, their red walls clothed with ivies, their crannies inhabited by starlings and jackdaws—a native of the district to which Lord Maxwell bade "good-night" in the famous ballad, and which adjoins the Ayrshire which Burns has consecrated from pastoral hill-top to valley daisy—his first spiritual food was naturally song, ballad, tradition. For in that region—quite as much as in the regions north of the Grampians—

"The ancient spirit is not dead."

Sent into the navy at an early age, he spent several years in the Mediterranean, visited the Grecian Isles and the Syrian coast, alternating his native Scottish traditions with older classical and sacred associations. The Acropolis succeeded to Drumlanrig fair; the far-seen snowy Lebanon to blue Criffel and the Solway; Horace and the Old Testament displaced the ballad-monger. On leaving the navy, and while yet a very young man, he flung himself into London literary life, while London literary life was more brilliant, socially and conversationally, than it is at present. For a literary man, Mr. Hannay may be said to have started with a fair variety of experience as a preliminary basis. It is not every man that, into the first twenty years or so of his life has crushed gray Scotland and the glowing East, the Mediterranean and the Solway, the classical poets and the Scottish ballads, the discipline and routine of duty on board a man-of-war; nay, something of the splendor and terror of war itself. His first literary efforts consisted of sketches of naval life, which met with considerable success. In 1851 he published his first novel, "Singleton Fontenoy;" and in 1854 his first volume of essays, entitled "Satire and Satirists," appeared. These essays, in all probability suggested by Mr. Thackeray's "English Humorists," were originally delivered in the form of lectures. Whether as lectures they were successful, we cannot say; but in that form their merits were discovered, and they made their appearance in a volume shortly after.

In six essays which the book contains, Mr.

Hannay gives an account of European satire from Horace to Jerrold ; and although somewhat slight, as was inevitable from its narrow limits, the work is thoroughly well done. From the polish of the suave old Roman to the wit of the Englishman, whose epigrams are yet ringing in our ears, is a journey which, if accomplished in a little book of two hundred pages, can allow but little loitering on the way. But for his task Mr. Hannay possessed abundant knowledge, and his special liking for his subject is everywhere evident. He lingers over the good things of his heroes ; he relates their immortal revenges with the same pride that the members of a regiment which has become historical recalls the battle-fields on which it gathered its renown. He speaks of Erasmus, Dryden, Pope, and Byron, as the art student copying in the galleries speaks of Michael Angelo and De Vinci,—appreciating their excellences, and hoping one day to emulate them. Mr. Hannay was not only qualified to write on the Satirists from taste, enthusiasm, and loving study, but from the possession of a power somewhat akin to their own. He writes clearly, criticises soundly when occasion arises ; yet one can see at a glance that the sovereign faculty of his own mind is wit. His thought is continually condensing itself into epigram. And then his wit has a certain something of poetry about it, which makes it all the more delightful ; it is continually going about with a flower of fancy in its hand. In "Satire and Satirists," Mr. Hannay—like all very clever young men—is somewhat spendthrift of his means. He is always giving sovereign "tips," so to speak. Some of his pages are as brilliant and dangerous with squib and serpent as a London pavement on Coronation night. He cracks his satirical whip for the mere pleasure he has in hearing it. If the occasion requires it, he fires off his rockets, and he fires them off frequently when there is no occasion in the least : there is a large stock on hand, and, after all, rockets are a very pretty sight. The following passage on the "Simious Satirists" will illustrate what we mean :—

"The simious satirist is distinguished by a deficiency of natural reverence mainly. His heart is hard, rather ; his feelings blunt and dull. He is blind to everything else but the satirical aspect of things ; and if he is brilliant, it is as a cat's back is when

rubb'd in the dark ! He has generally no sentiment of respect for form, and will spare nothing. He is born suspicious ; and if he hears the world admiring anything, forthwith he concludes that it must be 'humbug.' He has no regard to the heaps of honor gathered round this object by time and the affection of wise men. He cries, 'Down with it !' As his kinsman, when looking at some vase, or curious massive specimen of gold, sees only his own image in it, our satirist sees the ridiculous only in every object, and forgets that the more clearly he sees it, the more he testifies to its brightness. Or, as his kinsman breaks a cocoanut only to get at the milk, he would destroy everything only to nourish his mean nature. He prides himself on his commonest qualities, as the negroes who rebelled called themselves Marquises of Lemonade. He would tear the blossoms off a rose branch to make it a stick to beat his betters with. He employs his gifts in ignoble objects, as you see in sweetmeat shops sugar shaped into dogs and pigs. He taints his mind with egotism, as if a man should spoil the sight of a telescope by clouding it with his breath. He overrates the value of his quickness and activity, and forgets that, like his kinsman, he owes his triumphant power of swinging in high places to the fact of his prehensile tail."

Mr. Hannay, we have said, is fond of epigram, and it seems to us that in "Satire and Satirists" epigram is used at times somewhat vaingloriously. The epigram does not always arise naturally from the matter in hand ; it is rather stuck upon it like a bit of tinsel ; and this is perhaps the chief blot on the book. It is too clever, and it is too clever wilfully. This literary ornament, like all others, should be used sparingly. A gentleman gains nothing by covering his fingers with rings, and at any time one sole diamond is worth a dozen inferior stones. Yet it must be said that the writer is often exceedingly happy in his epigram. Take the following, for instance, on Theodore Hook : "They"—his noble patrons—"set him down to the piano, even before he had had his dinner sometimes, according to one biographer. This was too bad. He was proud, however, of the equivocal distinction he attained, and was inclined to swagger, I understand, among his equals. The plush had eaten into his very soul. Ultimately he ruined his heart, his circumstances, and (what was a still greater loss) his stomach, and so died. The biographer above mentioned observes, that his funeral was ill at-

tended by his great friends. But we need not wonder at that,—a funeral is a well-known ‘bore,’ and besides, the most brilliant wag cannot be amusing on the occasion of his own interment.” The closing sentence of this extract is perfect, and quite equal to the best thing of any epigrammatist. On the face and surface of it it is amusing. But it is more than that. It is a biography and a moral judgment in a single sentence. It reveals the relation which the wit bore to his patrons far more clearly than whole pages of writing or any amount of moral declamation. And in the book there are many sentences equally memorable.

“Essays from the *Quarterly*” is, in every way a better and riper book than its predecessor: the writing is always excellent, and if there is less epigram, there is more matter. The subjects of several of these essays lie in a region somewhat remote, not frequently visited by the modern man of letters; and on these subjects Mr. Hannay has written, not on account of their novelty, but because he was already acquainted with them, and had a special affection for them. In these essays there is little trace of “reading up;” he writes from the fulness of knowledge. Certain of the essays contained in the volume—as those on “Table Talk,” on “English Political Satires,” on “Electioneering,” and on “Horace and the Translators”—are, in the very nature of them, akin to “Satire and Satirists,” and may be considered as supplementary to that work. These he has treated everywhere with the old lightness, grace, and knowledge, but—having more space and leisure at command—with greater fulness and elaboration. It would be difficult to find pleasanter reading than these. The town is well worth seeing, and the cicerone knows every turn and winding, and is familiar with the best standpoints. It is a discourse on “good things,” by a writer who not only can appreciate them, but who can say them. It is a wit talking about wits. In these essays there is abundance of knowledge and sound sense, but the knowledge and the sense go about in sparkle and epigram.

There are two things which Mr. Hannay specially admires,—genius, wit, scholarship—literary distinction, in fact—and good blood. If you are a wit or a poet, he will take you to his heart; if you are neither wit

nor poet, he will take you to his heart equally enthusiastically if you can prove to him that your great-great-great-grandfather was ruined in the wars of the Roses. His admiration for wit, scholarship, and song he has set forth in “Satire and Satirists,” and in certain of his “Essays from the *Quarterly*;” his admiration for ancient and historical names airs itself in his essays on “British Family Histories” and “The Historic Peerage of England.” These essays are quite peculiar in their way. It is not often that the reflected colors of *or* and *gules* lie on the popular page. But seldom have genealogical trees greened with the spring, and put forth blossoms of fancy. Genealogy itself has been the favorite pursuit of Dr. Dryasdust. But poetic association can do almost anything. An old china cup may be uninteresting enough in itself; but when one remembers the fair lips that once touched it, the dead scandals that were talked over it, it becomes at once an object of interest. An old Roman coin may be quite useless for the purchase of modern beef or bread; but when you gaze imaginatively on the half-obliterated effigy of the Roman Emperor, the intervening centuries collapse and perish, England becomes green waste and forest; up springs the triumphal arch, the conqueror passes through it with all his captives, you hear the shouts of the populace. And so, to Mr. Hannay, a great name recalls a thousand memories; he sees the chivalric and the wise faces of the men, and the beautiful eyes of the women, that belong to it. An old castle is sacred in his eyes, for noble memories grow upon it as thickly as its shrouding ivies. He sees the modern earl standing, but Agincourt is in the background, and there is always “a pomp of fancied trumpets on the wind.” He traces the stems of ancient families, and lingers over the flowers of valor, wit, genius, personal beauty, which generation after generation they put forth, and which brighten yet the air of history. He values a sprig of ivy or a wild flower from a castle wall over which a banner once flapped, more than the wealth of Rothschild. To be embalmed in a ballad is the fame which he covets most. He is fond of crests, and coats of armor, and all the insignia of the herald; but he cares nothing for these in themselves—his affection goes out towards what these symbols

represent. He reverences the Bloody Heart, and cares not on what material it may be worked—the standard's silken folds, or the gaberdine of the beggar. He laughs openly at the chivalric device and motto blazing on the coach panels of the successful coal merchant. The past moves him mightily—he is attracted by the deeds, the wit, the splendor of long ago; and on the past he continually feels that the present is based, and is its natural outcome and result. Instinctively he feels that in history there is sequence and progression; in the face of the son he seeks to discern something of the high features of the father. And it is his belief that the ancient feudal hardihood did not die out on feudal battle-fields, that wit did not expire forever in the poem or the epigram in which it made itself visible, that beauty did not cease finally in wrinkles and gray hairs. He thinks that the virtues of race are the truest heirlooms, descending from father to son, and from mother to daughter, far more certainly than broad lands and castles. He holds that the courage which kept the trenches in the Crimea, and which subdued the Indian mutiny, is directly transmitted from the men who fought at Bosworth and Marston Moor, and that the beauty which charms us to-day is a reminiscence of the beauty which charmed the Cavaliers. Thus, by perpetuation of valor and beauty, he knits century with century, and generation with generation; thus to his mind does epoch flow out of epoch. And this theory—which doubtless many will be inclined to dispute—Mr. Hannay supports by numerous instances:—

" Few writers in our day have a word of decent civility for the family of Stewart. It would be curious to trace its hereditary character in the chief line; our present purpose is only to remark on the greatness attained by some men who descended maternally from it. We need scarcely say that the mother of William of Orange was a Stewart princess. The mother of Cromwell was, as we believe, of one branch of the family. So was the mother of the admirable Crichton; and of the famous soldier Alexander Leslie, first Earl of Leven. Chatham was nearly and directly from the royal stem, through his grandmother—descendant of the Regent Murray. Fox's mother, Lady Lennox, was immediately descended from Charles II. Byron had the blood in his veins. How interesting to see eminent families sharing in this kind of way in a great

man's renown! The gifted Shaftesbury's mother was a Manners; Algernon Sidney's a Percy; and his famous kinsman, Philip's, a Dudley; the poet Beaumont's a Pierrépont. The mother of Marshall Stair was a Dundas; and the brilliant Peterborough was the son of one of the brilliant Carys. The Ruthvens and Carnegies gave mothers to Montrose and Dundee. The Villierses gave a mother to Chatham; the Granvilles to Pitt; the Douglasses of Strathhenry to Adam Smith. Nelson inherited the blood of the Sucklings and Walpoles; Collingwood that of the Greys and Plantagenets. From the Hampdens came the mother of Waller, and also Mary Arden (of that ancient Warwickshire family), the mother of Shakspeare. The literary talent runs through female lines like other qualities: Swift's mother was a Herrick, and his grandmother a Dryden. Donne, derived through his mother, from Sir Thomas More; and Cowper in the same way from the Donnes. Thomson had the Hume blood in his veins. A daughter of Becaria produced Manzoni. The late Bishop Coplestone evidently got his playfulness from the Gays, as Chesterfield his wit from Lord Halifax. The relationship between Fielding and "Lady Mary" is well known. Sometimes, when a notable man comes from a family never before heard of, it happens that he just comes after a marriage with a better one: Thus the mother of Seldon was of the Knightly Bakers of Kent; Camdens, of the ancient Curwines of Workington, and Watts of the old stock of Muirhead. . . . Philosophers, like Bacon, Hume, and Berkeley; poets, like Spenser, Cowper, Shelley, and Scott; novelists, like Fielding and Smollett; historians, like Gibbon; seamen, like Collingwood, Howe, Jervis, Vanes, St. Johns, Raleighs, George Herberts, and many other men of the ancient gentry, amply vindicate the pretensions of old families to the honor of producing the best men that England has ever seen."

Holding the theory that families can only rise to distinction through superiority of some kind,—that, having arisen, they intermarry with families on their own social level, who have also arisen through superiority of some kind,—consequently that the offspring of such marriages have a double chance of possessing an unusual share of brain or of general power, and that the virtue of race thus built up is perpetuated in the descendants, and is continually making itself visible in them. Mr. Hannay is in politics inevitably a Conservative. A nation must be ruled by its best men, and the best men must be sought in the old houses. If a

man wishes to enter into public affairs, the best letter of introduction he can bring with him is his ancient descent. We know what his family has been in the past; and as he inherits the virtues and the traditions of his race, we can form some idea of how he will turn out. His good conduct is guaranteed by a hundred ancestors. Holding these doctrines, Mr. Hannay naturally detests democracy, looks upon universal suffrage with no favorable eye, is quite the reverse of an adherent of Mr. Bright's, and does not think that America has solved the problem of how a nation can be best governed. He does not consider that a cheap government is necessarily the best, and he expects nothing but disorder from an extension of the franchise. He thus expresses himself in the essay on "The Historic Peerage": — "This—the great difference between the vulgar and the noble seed"—was an article of faith among the gentlemen of the kingdom. They held the old Greek doctrine, that 'nobility is virtue of race,' and believed that those who possessed it were naturally superior to other men. Their portraits—calm, stately, brave, and wise faces—justify their creed to the eye; and the men they produced—the Sydenys, Raleighs, Bacons—justify it to the understanding. By and by there will be a bearing again for this side of affairs in Europe, after the total failure of the revolutionary party to produce governing intellects has had a still wider scope to show itself in."

So, argues Mr. Hannay, the old houses possessed calmness, dignity, bravery, wisdom; they were leaders, they were statesmen; and when we wish these qualities to bear on the work of government, we cannot do better than seek for them in the persons of their descendants. There is at least *one* chance more that the governing intellect will be found there than in other regions. The quarter of the wood in which you gathered strawberries six summers ago, is the likeliest place to find strawberries when they are again wanted.

This view of the virtue of race, and its transmission in the blood from father to son, is rather indicated than formally argued out in these essays. Of course many objections will be taken to it; and as a theory, it cannot be accepted *in toto*. Its truth ends when its chapter of instances ends. Grant that a family rises above the level of mankind

through superiority of one kind or another, that superiority is not transmitted perpetually. Even when a family which has been potent does not actually die out, the superiority which it once possessed, and by virtue of which it arose, seems at times to die out. There were historical families which have disappeared entirely from history, just as there were stars known to the ancient astronomers which are not now visible in our heavens; certain families, too, seem to lose, after a generation or so, their ancient pith and force, and to lose themselves as a stream loses itself in a morass. Mr. Hannay hints that, as Cromwell had a dash of the Stewart blood in his veins, the Stewart blood should have the credit of his greatness; but Cromwell's son, Richard, had the Stewart blood also, and he let the reins of government slip from his grasp through weakness and ineptitude. Then, admitting the theory of general force in a race, you never can tell what shape that general force will take in a descendant. Every now and again, in a historical line, an alien character seems to blossom out, as the spiritual, saintly face of Edward IV. gleams among the strong-willed and masterful Tudors. Mr. Hannay tells us that many men of the "ancient gentry" amply vindicate the pretensions of old families to the honor of "producing the best men that England has ever seen." The phrase "ancient gentry" is a misleading one. How ancient? Mr. Hannay does not limit the ancient gentry to the descendants of the men who came over with the Conqueror. In every generation certain families rise out of the people into the position of gentry; and if the theory is correct, that a family only rises into eminent station through general superiority, and that that superiority is to some extent perpetuated, the governing intellect is as likely to be found in the descendant of the gentleman of one century's standing as in the descendant of the gentleman of ten. And, in point of fact, it is as readily found. Within the last seventy years the Buonapartes have become occupants of thrones, the Peel family rose into eminence quite lately, the Gladstone family yet more recently. But, putting evil aside, Mr. Hannay's view of blood contains much truth, and is essentially poetic besides. He looks back with reverence and affection on the generations of dead Englishmen and

Englishwomen. The eyes of the Countess of Salisbury haunt him. He cannot forget Sidney's chivalric face ; he enjoys the wit of Charles II. quite as much as did any of his courtiers. He walks back into history, and he is greeted by wit and song, and beautiful women and fine manners, and splendid furniture and array. The old time, with its color and high spirits, lives again for him ; again the feast is spread in the feudal castle ; again the feudal banners unroll themselves on the breeze ; again, on the battle-field, old war-cries are shouted. And, in a country like England, so full of the past, not only in its political constitution and in its unparalleled literature, but in objects which appeal directly to the eye—in mighty castle ruins, where nobles lived who mated once with kings ; cathedrals in which the sound of chanting is heard no more ; Westminster Abbey with its dead ; the world's first sailor and soldier beneath the dome of St. Paul's ; dwellings of nobles, sequestered in oak woods, which for two hundred autumns now have shed their acorns ; princely colleges, endowed by liberal and pious men of old ; guns and banners captured in every quarter of the globe—this reverence and affection for the remarkable families who have headed its efforts in every direction is most natural and befitting. English history was not built up by knaves and scoundrels, and men hungry for wealth and advancement, but mainly by good and noble men and women. The virtues had more to do with it than the vices. Mr. Hannay loves his land, but it is with a love

“ Far brought
From out the storied past.”

And although his readers may not go all the way with him in his theories of descent, yet it may be said that even in these theories there is a great proportion of truth, and a side of the truth which has perhaps not been sufficiently dwelt upon of late. We need to be reminded at times that worth is older than the steam engine, that the present is moored upon the past, and that a great deal of what we are proudest of is drawn directly from our ancestors. Mr. Hannay has lived in close intellectual companionship with great Englishmen—the nobles, the wits, the cavaliers who could turn a stanza on the pleasures of the wine cup and the beauty of woman, as well as, on battle mornings, fling

themselves bravely on the foemen's pikes ; and from this intercourse with these worthies he has gained much, for into his own writings he has imported the grace, the polish, and the wit for which they are so remarkable.

Readers of *Fraser's Magazine* have, for the last six or seven years, been familiar with critical and descriptive papers to which the signature of “ Shirley ” was appended—papers which, considered as literature, rose considerably above the average contents of a periodical which has always been distinguished for literary excellence. Having read these papers with singular pleasure as they appeared month by month, we are glad to see them collected in a volume, which, if it gets its deserts, will find a place in many a private as well as in many a circulating library. Shirley is a pleasantly vagrant writer ; his thought gads and wanders around his subject like the wild convolvulus, taking color and fragrance with it wherever it goes. If, for the most part, he avoids profound subjects, never attempts exhaustive treatment, he is always eminently readable, charming his reader with an unusual grace of presentation and the light of pleasant fancies. He has a laudable horror of dulness ; he is a bookish man, well read in the poets and prose writers—a little too indolently inclined, perhaps, to quote the poets—tasteful, acute, picturesque ; and the essays now republished are the mere play and recreation of his mind. He takes up his pen from the same motive, and with the same enjoyment, that he puts his foot in the stirrup and rides into the country—down the quiet lane scented with white and red dog-roses, out to the headland which gazes upon the azure world of the Atlantic, up to the red ruin of the hill patched with ivies. In these papers there is no plodding, no burden or heat of the day ; he infects the reader with his own freshness of feeling ; everything is light, airy, graceful. He yachts over the shining seas of criticism and speculation. He is fond of out-door life, of bare and level sands through which the slow stream stagnates to the main, of worn and fantastic northern rocks around which sea-birds wheel and clamor, and on which the big billow smites itself into a column of foam. The sea-side he is never tired of painting ; yet we feel that at the sea-side he

does not spend his days. We almost fancy that Shirley writes only in vacation. His essays do not seem to have been produced in a study littered with books; rather they seem to have been composed in tweeds and "wide-a-wake" in a clover field; for the shadows of the tall grasses are constantly chequering his pages, and the summer breeze and the lark's song seem to get entangled and mingled with his sentences somehow. He is fond of framing his criticisms with a border of landscape or incidents of country life; and it not unfrequently happens that the frame is more valuable than the picture it contains. And this constant intrusion of the outside world into the critical and more serious papers, which is at best a pretty irrelevance, symptomatic perhaps of volatility of mind and purpose, suggests the main defect of these essays, which consists in a certain lack of body and thoroughness. They have but little specific gravity. There is too much holiday and too little work in them. They are brilliant enough, but it is rather the brilliance of nebulous vapor than of the condensed and solid star. They lack personality, and the definite edge of intellectual character. They are of the stuff that dreams are made of. If a writer professes to give us a critical estimate of a book or an author, we naturally expect that he shall at once proceed to do so; if he begins with a description of a troutng stream, tells us how a girl fords it with kilted petticoats, then relates how he captured a fish, and the exclamation of a certain "Bob Morris" from the opposite bank on witnessing the feat, then diverges on a yellow bee which comes humming along seeking honey on the heathery bent, we begin to suspect either that he is conscious that he has nothing critically important to say, or that he is terribly afraid of the trouble of saying it. To write critically may not be so easy as to write descriptively; but it must be done nevertheless, and especially should it be done by a writer who professes to do it. Why should not criticism be criticism and nothing else? When you have a book to review, what necessity is there for running into Arcadia with it to accomplish the task? Arcadians do not compose the modern reading world. Shirley spars prettily enough, but it is all sparring, with no close and wrestle. Before he arrives at his subject,

he has to walk into the country for a couple of miles, and has his fish to catch. In the "Sphinx," certainly one of the best of his essays, and which, as dealing with the impotence of history, might be supposed to demand a uniform seriousness of treatment, he starts off in the following manner:—

"We sat on the Devil's Bridge, and swung our legs over the parapet, Reginald de Moreville and I.

"The De Morevilles were a fine Norman family in the reign of David I., 'that sair sanct for the crown.' The present representative inherits the feudal tastes of his house, without the burden of its acres.

"The arch of a royal dome that hangs above the blue sea! Down the storm-stained sides of the precipice we can see the marrots standing like sentries along the slippery ledges, crowding around their fantastically colored eggs, indulging in expressions of uncouth fun and uncouth endearment. Farther off, the skua gulls, 'white as ocean foam in the moon,' 'white as the consecrated snow that lies on Dian's lap' (choose between Shakspeare and Tennyson), float along the face of the cliffs, or hover above their nests on noiseless wings. Yet, lower, the blue and shining deep beats against the iron bases of the hills, and moans among the caverned fissures where the seal and the otter lodge."

Now, considered merely as writing, the sentences we have quoted have distinct and substantial merits; they possess music and color, and a firm consistent movement. But it seems to us that a man properly possessed with his subject, and with an instinct for the heart of it, would not have chosen to begin after this fashion. Especially would he have avoided the poetical extracts and the sentence contained in brackets, for that kind of by-play—that irrelevant thinking within thinking—does not occur to one whose loins are sufficiently girt for his work. When a man is in haste, or is impelled onward by a strong motive, he does not gather the flowers that grow by the wayside, and compare their beauties. Now, all this kind of thing is a literary iniquity, and a face of flint should be set against it. It has become far too common of late. It increases the bulk of books without increasing their value. It obstructs the literary thoroughfare as crinoline obstructs the material one. Shirley is too frequently a sinner in this way; and it is no palliation of his fault that he sins gracefully, fancifully, eloquently, because

lesser men, who have neither his grace nor his fancy, may be tempted to follow his example.

Having indicated what seems to us the defect of the book, we are prepared now to give "Nugæ Criticæ" our warmest welcome. It is thoroughly fresh, genial, and pleasant; and that portion of it which directly relates to out-door life—happily no inconsiderable portion—is uniformly excellent. Shirley is a sportsman; he is fond of the aquatic tribes of birds; he is familiar with the scenery of our eastern and northern coasts; and his opening paper, "At the Seaside," is written with humor, vividness, spirit, and a quite unusual power of picturesque presentation. It is a true vacation paper. As we read, the hum of the city dies away, and we are transported to the chalky cliffs, on whose scalps are cornfields with scarlet poppies intermixed, and beyond a whole horizonful of ocean, sleek and blue in the lazy summer day. Although everything is silent, the silence does not arise from absence of life. A gun, and the rocks are clamorous with startled sea-fowls. Shirley has affectionately watched the habits of gulls, ducks, divers, loons, herons, and cormorants, and the swan that comes out of the northern twilight; and since Christopher North dropped his pen, we have had no better ornithological writing. Take this photograph of the cormorant, or *scrath*, as he is locally called:—

"The *scrath* is not by any means a lively bird; he entertains serious, not to say gloomy, views on most of the questions of the day. I have seen the cormorants who frequent this rock sit together for hours without uttering a syllable to each other—in a kind of dyspeptic dejection. Apart from his sentiments upon serious subjects, this is probably the result of a system of over-feeding; for, even with the most perfect digestion, such excessive eating must tell upon the spirits. They are, moreover, somewhat speculative birds, and employ their leisure in various impracticable experiments. They seem, in particular, to entertain a theory that they are intended by Providence to live upon invisible pinnacles, where a titmouse could not find footing. The consequences may be easily foreseen. No sooner is the unwieldy monster seated than he loses his balance, and a fierce and violent flapping of his sable pinions is required to prevent him from falling to the bottom. Nothing can convince him of the fallacy of the notion; and it would be diffi-

cult to determine what satisfaction or enjoyment he can derive from an insane proceeding like this, which so ill consorts, moreover, with the sepulchral gravity of his appearance."

Nothing can well be better in its light way than this; and the affectionately humorous exaggeration brings out, far more vividly than any cold and exact description could do, the characteristics of the grave funereal fowl. Shirley enters into the heart of his cormorant as Mr. Carlyle enters into the heart of his hero, and works out from that. And this peculiar kind of humorous and picturesque presentment is not alone confined to the passage we have quoted. It pervades more or less every page of the opening paper, which, as we have said, is the pleasantest and ablest of his essays.

The most important papers in the book, so far at least as actual substance and gravity of treatment are concerned, are the three entitled, "People who are not respectable;" "A Lay Sermon on Nonconformity, a Plea for Liberty;" and "William the Silent, the earliest Teacher of Toleration." The first deals with Lola Montez, Heine, and the Abbé Domenech, and reveals an audacious generosity of sentiment; the beauty and the poet are tenderly dealt with, and when rebuked there is a sneaking kindness in the rebuke. The second is a reply to two questions, "In the first place, how is the State—and in the second place how is the Church, to treat Nonconformity?" while the third relates in a rapid way, somewhat after Lord Macaulay's fashion, the career of Orange the Taciturn, and rises into panegyric towards the close on that prince's tolerant and unpersecuting spirit in the midst of an intolerant and persecuting time. These essays depend one upon the other; and however diverse in subject, they form one argument. This age, it appears, is not tolerant enough; the persecuting spirit is as virulent as ever, the methods of martyrdom are only changed. Hear Shirley on the matter: "In many circles, you would incur more odium if you told its members that you read 'Maurice' and 'Jowett,' and believed them to be good and honest men, than if you picked their pockets. Holy hands are lifted in pious horror; an inquisition is held upon the condition-of-your-soul question; your opinions, which you

have always supposed to be at least harmless, charitable, and good-natured, if nothing better, are pronounced ‘unsound’ and ‘unsafe’ (words of evil import) by the assembled saints ; and you are then solemnly tied to the stake and burned—fortunately in effigy only.” “The victim may indeed retreat from the family and the sect, sever local ties which daily become more oppressive and unmanageable, and calmly appeal to a wider tribunal. But the rent is very trying to mortal nerves ; the heartstrings sometimes crack in the venture.” So much for social martyrdom. Now for the question between Nonconformity and the Church. “A national Church, in the largest sense, is the development of the devotional side of the national mind. . . . If this definition be accurate,—and we are convinced that it is,—then it follows that such an institution, maintained it may be out of the public purse, should be devoted to the service of the public ; and that any limitations of *caste*, or of doctrine, when not absolutely indispensable, are inconsistent with its design and with the purpose for which it exists. Any condition which prevents any religious citizen from becoming a minister (and thereby partaking of the emoluments to which he would otherwise be entitled), or a member (and thereby partaking of the privileges which communion confers), is, *prima facie*, imperious and indefensible. A clear necessity alone can justify its retention. Is there, then, to be no limitation? Are men of all opinions and of no opinions to find shelter within the sanctuary? To such a question the reply is obvious. A national Church cannot be permitted to lose its representative character. The national Church of a Christian people must remain distinctively Christian, just as the national Church of a Mahometan people must remain distinctively Mahometan.” Elsewhere, we find that “the clergyman, when he has once ‘taken’ the Articles, undergoes a species of petrifaction; he becomes fossil thenceforth to the day of his death. The rich and invaluable lessons which experience teaches must not be learned by him; he must close his eyes upon the growing light; his moral and intellectual nature, like Joshua’s sun at Ajalon, ‘must come to a full stop.’”

In a paper like the present, it is not advisable to enter into these deep matters of

controversy, and all the less advisable that they have already been discussed in the pages of this journal. It may be permitted to be said, however, “that a national Church, in the largest sense, is the development of the devotional side of the national mind,” just as a standing army is the development of the fighting side of the national character ; and that Church and army, to be effective, must possess identity of purpose and uniformity of discipline. To have persons of peculiar doctrinal views within the national Church, and who give expression to these peculiar doctrines, would be quite as hurtful, and would lead to a like confusion, as to have persons in the ranks who have peculiar notions as to how marching is to be conducted, and who assert their individuality in the method of discharging their firelocks. If persons of peculiar notions on certain doctrinal points are to be admitted into the Church, you turn the Church itself into a bear garden ; it immediately begins to fight with itself, instead of fighting against the evil which is in the world. Shirley very properly says, “that the national Church of a Christian people must be distinctively Christian ;” but who is to be the judge of *what is* distinctively Christian? The disbeliever in the Divinity of Christ calls himself a Christian ; the person enjoying the gift of the unknown tongues calls himself a Christian ; the believer in purgatory and transubstantiation calls himself a Christian ; and as all these accept the Scriptures, to some extent at least, as an authority, and are certainly neither Mahometans, Pagans, nor Jews, it would be difficult to rob them of the appellation. But could a Church exist with these discordant and inflammable elements in its bosom? What is “distinctively Christian” must, like every other dispute in the world, be decided practically by the majorities. And if men holding peculiar notions of doctrine or discipline shall have entered the Church, or if, after entering, they find that, from whatever reason, they cannot conscientiously give intellectual adherence to the standards of the Church, and if, in consequence of this discordance between themselves and their brethren, they are uncomfortable, ill at ease, what is the course they should adopt? They have placed themselves, or they find themselves, in a false position, and their duty is to get

out of that false position with as little delay as possible. Honesty, comfort, reverence for their own consciences and for the consciences of others, alike counsel resignation of their positions in the Church.

With respect to the social martyrdom to which Shirley refers, it may be said that, from the very constitution of things, such martyrdoms have always been and ever will be. The man who acts in the teeth of public opinion—and it matters nothing whether that opinion is local or general—must, as a matter of necessity, meet opposition; he is like a ship sailing against a head wind. A certain conformity with the existing order of things is required of all men, under penalties of discomfort. A man cannot even take mustard to his mutton, or eat peas with his knife, with impunity. This is very intolerant, it is true; but tolerance to the man who chooses to eat peas with his knife is intolerance to twenty people who may be sitting at dinner with him. Shirley tells us that there are certain circles in which a man incurs odium by reading "Maurice" and "Jowett." It is unquestionably true. And if a man chooses to attire himself in the jacket of a harlequin, he will incur odium in every circle he enters. If a man acts in opposition to the opinions, the prejudices, the traditions of the people with whom he mixes, he is just as certain to incur opposition and pain as he is to hurt himself if he runs his head against a wall. The nonconformist never did tread on roses, and till the constitution of human nature changes, on roses he will never tread. And this fate awaits not only the nonconformist in religion, but all nonconformists alike. The nonconformist in hate is liable to be stared at in the street, and it is possible that he may overhear the remarks of irreverent urchins as he passes by. The nonconformist in politics has his own annoyances: Peel had hard words and ungenerous insinuations to bear when he split with his party. The nonconformist, if he has any knowledge of men, will expect some little trouble and misrepresentation to fall to his lot, and he will not care to make a noise about it. If the path of the nonconformist were perfectly smooth, what merit would there be in his nonconformity?

Several essays in Shirley's book, other than those we have mentioned, are of great merit, especially "The Last Word on Lord

Macaulay," which indicates with clearness the limitations and defects of the great writer—altogether the best piece of critical writing which he has produced. "Terra Santa; a Peep into Italy," contains reading of the pleasantest kind; and the allusions it contains to Mr. Hawthorne and Mrs. Browning are characteristic—for, after all, this writer sees the world clearest through the window of books. On whatever subject he writes, you are sure to come into contact with the writers he most admires. In "Nugae Criticae" Shirley touches on many subjects, and always with grace and true literary skill; but we confess that we like him best "at the sea-side:" his vagrant, desultory, yet always pleasant and picturesque vein, flows freest when he has the eastern coast to deal with—the sea and the sea-fowl. He is always at his best when out of doors.

A. K. H. B. gathered his reputation in *Fraser*; is, we understand, exceedingly popular in England, and prodigiously so across the Atlantic. That this popularity arises from a certain merit discoverable in his essays, there can, of course, be no matter of question; he is an exceedingly clever writer, he has a happy knack of putting things, he is always readable. Yet it would be difficult to explain by what charm he leads us along his pages. One only feels that the charm exists. A. K. H. B. is as egotistical as Montaigne, but in no other particular does he resemble him. There is great sameness in his papers: reading them is like walking on an American prairie; green undulation follows on green undulation, beginning nowhere, ending nowhere without prospect, without outlook. He starts on his subject without a pocket compass, and after a long circuit he arrives at the place from which he set out; and the worst is, he arrives as empty-handed as when he started. He could perform the feat of voyaging round the world, and bringing home nothing. A great element of success in a writer is peculiarity, and A. K. H. B. has his peculiarities. Once possessed of an idea, he can make it go farther than any of his contemporaries. Give him a bit of gold, and no man living will beat it out into a broader and thinner leaf. Mount him on a platitude, and he will make it carry him

across a county. In his essays he laughs occasionally at Mr. Martin Farquhar Tupper; but he is related to the body of contemporary prose very much as Mr. Tupper is related to the body of contemporary verse, and the popularity of each arises from similar causes. For the mass of readers it is a pleasant thing to feel that they are as wise as the author they are reading, and the mass of A. K. H. B.'s readers are made happy in this way.

A. K. H. B. is an egotist; he is continually writing about his essays, his sermons, his methods of composition, his garden, his children, his man-servant—if that functionary dips furtively into *Fraser's Magazine* when his master is done with it, he must be gratified by the manifold recognition of his existence—his own horses or the horses of his friends. Now, to egotism in itself no man will object, provided the egotist is great or peculiar. We never weary of Montaigne or of Charles Lamb when they are speaking about themselves. Unhappily, however, A. K. H. B. is neither great nor peculiar; he is simply a clever, fluent man, well read up in current literature, conversant with its “slang,” in the dexterous use of which one-half of his smartness consists, perfectly ready to kick a man when it is the fashion to kick him—witness his frequent sneers at Mr. Tupper and Mr. Wordy—and who can prattle in a pleasant way enough “Concerning Hurry and Leisure,” “Tidiness,” and certain “Blisters of Humanity.” Egotism of the light, trifling kind, which A. H. K. B. indulges in, is apt to weary one after a little, after a very little while one gets irritated at his familiar, hail-fellow-well-met, dawdling, sauntering ways, disgusted rather with his man-servant and horses, and a little inclined to request him in a somewhat peremptory manner, to say his say “concerning” whatever subject he may have in hand, in a direct, straightforward fashion, and have done. He cannot, without protest, be permitted to take the airs of a Montaigne. If he writes “Concerning the Pairing of Nails,” let him discuss the general subject with what light may be given him, and cease to linger so lovingly over his own.

And yet, after all, there is a certain charm in A. K. H. B.'s essays. He writes for the most part with grace and purity; he possesses fancy, liveliness, and his papers have now and again touches of shrewdness, in-

sight, and common sense. If some savage critic would lay hold of him, whip the pestilent coxcombry out of him, he would do the world some service, and confer on A. K. H. B. himself the greatest benefit he will ever receive from a fellow-mortals. For in him the elements of an excellent writer do uncontestedly exist. He possesses “faculties” which, hitherto, “he hath no used,” or only in a perfunctory way and at long intervals. He can be direct, suggestive, pathetic even, when he chooses, but the misfortune is he so seldom chooses. The best thing which he has written is a little paper entitled “Gone,” absolutely without grimace or wilful irrelevance, and into the pathetic undertone of which neither himself, nor his garden, nor his next Sunday's sermon, nor even his man-servant, does for one moment intrude. In the following passage A. K. H. B. is at his best, perhaps:

“Every one knows what Dr. Johnson wrote about *The Last*. It is, of course, a question of individual associations, and how it may strike different minds; but I stand up for the unrivalled reach and pathos of the short word *Gone*.

“It is curious, that the saddest and most touching of human thoughts, when we run it up to its simplest form, is of so homely a thing as a material object existing in a certain space, and then removing from that space to another. *That* is the essential idea of *Gone*.

“Yet, in the commonest way, there is something touching in that: something touching in the sight of vacant space, once filled by almost anything. You feel a blankness in the landscape where a tree is gone that you have known all your life. You are conscious of a vague sense of something lacking where even a post is pulled up that you remember always in the centre of a certain field. You feel this yet more when some familiar piece of furniture is taken away from a room which you know well. Here that clumsy easy-chair used to stand: and it is gone. You feel yourself an interloper, standing in the space where it stood so long. It touches you still more to look at the empty chair which you remember so often filled by one who will never fill it more. You stand in a large railway station: you have come to see a train depart. There is a great bustle on the platform, and there is a great quantity of human life, and of the interests and cares of human life, in those twelve or fourteen carriages, and filling that little space between the rails. You stand by and watch the warm interiors of the car-

riages, looking so large and so full, as if they had so much in them. There are people of every kind of aspect, children and old folk, multitudes of railway rugs, of carpet bags, of portmanteaus, of parcels, of newspapers, of books, of magazines. At length you hear the last bell; then comes that silent, steady pull, which is always striking, though seen ever so often. The train glides away: it is gone. You stand and look vacantly at the place where it was. How little the space looks: how blank the air! There are the two rails, just four feet eight and a half inches apart; how close together they look! You can hardly think that there was so much of life, and of the interests of life, in so little room. You feel the power upon the average human being of the simple, commonplace fact, that something has been here, and is gone."

There is not very much in this, perhaps, but it is nicely felt; and the illustration, if familiar to all, cannot fail to be felt by all. Most of us have seen a railway train depart, and when nothing remains but bare rails and empty space, have been conscious, in an obscure way, of the subtly mingled strangeness and regret which A. K. H. B. so tenderly indicates.

Mr. Patterson's "Essays in History and Art" contain less of the personal element than the writings of Shirley or A. K. H. B., and are on that account perhaps less interesting. We hear nothing of his peculiar moods, of the house he lives in, or the places he visits. He does not begin a paper on the banks of a troutting stream, or seated on the parapet of the Devil's Bridge, with his legs dangling over, like Shirley; nor does he haunt stables, and make a writing-desk of a horse's face, like A. K. H. B. He has nothing of the lightness, jauntiness, and holiday feeling of these gentlemen. He means work; he desires to inform rather than to amuse. The more important papers in the volume—on the "Ethnology of Europe," "Our Indian Empire," "The National Life of China," "India, its Castes and Creeds"—are laboriously and solidly done. Into these essays he has gathered the pith and essence of many books; and to people wishing to be informed on these matters, we do not know a volume more entirely to be recommended than Mr. Patterson's. The style is always clear, if at times a little ornate; and evidences of conscientiousness and care are everywhere manifest. Mr. Patterson, when

he has a solid, useful information subject on hand, is at his best. Certain of the lighter papers—as, for instance, "Youth and Summer," "Genius and Liberty" are spoiled by an Asiatic floridity of taste. A passage like the following rather provokes a smile in the judicious:—

"But the genius of Greece is rising in beauty everywhere on land and sea—the blue *Ægean*, gemmed with the 'sparkling Cyclades,' bearing, like floating flower-baskets, the isles of Greece on its calm surface. On the lovely bay-indented shores of Iona, where the vines are trailing in festoons from tree to tree, lighting the emerald woods with their purple clusters, sits merry Anacreon, singing of love and wine in undying strains. Light-hearted old man, sing on!—until, in luckless hour, the choking grapestone end at once thy lays, thy loves, and thy life. The lofty strains of Alcaeus and Simonides make the *Ægean* shores to re-echo their undying hatred of a tyrannic power; while on her Lesbian isle, hapless Sappho, weary of a fame that cannot bring her love, leaps from the cliffs of Leucus into the sea, but lives forever in her country's memory as the Tenth Muse."

* This is a kind of eloquence which convulses the debating societies of young men in their teens, and the frequency of its appearance in these essays proves that Mr. Patterson retains in middle life all the juvenility and freshness of his youthful spirit.

It is with a certain proud sorrow that we regard "Essays, Historical and Critical," by Hugh Miller. Six years have passed since the writer was borne to his grave, and his place in literature is as well defined now as it was on the day in which he was laid in the Grange; and future years, with a sense of the sacredness of their task, will keep clear from all intrusion Miller's place in the literature of his country. The British Valhalla will be crowded indeed when room cannot be found for him. Miller was not only an accomplished journalist and able geologist, a writer singularly acute and picturesque, but he was something beyond all these—a great man. He possessed, in some degree, that largeness of limb and majesty of mental lineament, which distinguished Burns and Scott, Chalmers and John Wilson. He came up from the red sandstone quarries of Cromarty into his fame, as Burns came into his from the Ayrshire harvest fields. Scotland

is proud to think that she is peculiarly the mother of such men ; and if Burns was her first-born and greatest, Hugh Miller was her second, and only in stature a little lower than the first. The present volume of essays is entirely selected from the file of the *Witness* newspaper ; consequently it does not so much represent Miller at his best, as in his usual working attire. These papers were not written by him with a view to separate publication ; they were composed in his usual course of duty as a journalist ; and as newspaper articles, their concision, their wit, their fancy, their richness of sentence, are quite wonderful. The opening essay on "The New Year," is an exquisite poem. The visit of her majesty to Edinburgh in 1842 was an interesting event, but it is doubly so when we see it through the medium of Mr. Miller's graphic and picturesque prose. In the opening sentences—so exquisite in their natural analogies—of the article entitled "The Echoes of the World," an article which concerns itself with the death of Dr. Chalmers, we have the truest poetry as well as the most impressive statement of fact :—

" Has the reader ever heard a piece of heavy ordnance fired amid the mountains of our country ? First, there is the ear-stunning report of the piece itself,—the prime mover of those airy undulations that travel outwards, circle beyond circle, towards the far horizon ; then some hoary precipice, that rises tall and solemn in the immediate neighborhood, takes up the sound, and it comes rolling back from its rough front in thunder, like a giant wave flung far seaward from the rock against which it has broken ; then some more distant hill becomes vocal, and then another, and another, and anon another ; and then there is a slight pause,

as if all were over—the undulations are travelling unbroken along some flat moor or across some expansive lake, or over some deep valley, filled, haply, by some long, wide, and roaring arm of the sea ; and then the more remote mountains lift up their voices in mysterious mutterings, now lower, now louder, now more abrupt, anon more prolonged, each as it recedes taking up the tale in closer succession to the one that had previously spoken, till at length their distinct utterances are lost in one low continuous sound, that at last dies out amid the shattered peaks of the desert wilderness, and unbroken stillness settles over the scene as at first. Through a scarcely voluntary exertion of that faculty of analogy and comparison, so natural to the human mind that it converts all the existences of the physical world into forms and expressions of the world intellectual, we have oftener than once thought of the phenomenon and its attendant results as strikingly representative of effects produced by the death of Chalmers. It is an event which has, we find, rendered vocal the echoes of the world, and they are still returning upon us, after measured intervals, according to the distances."

This is wonderful writing ; and when Miller proceeds to complete his analogy by describing how, from every quarter of the world, there came back here, in a murmur of grief and admiration, the report of the death of Chalmers, the effect of the whole is singularly grand and complete. It is contemplated, we notice from the preface, that, should the present collection of essays meet with success, other and similar volumes may be gathered from the file of the *Witness*. Of the success of the book there can be no manner of doubt, so that we presume we may soon look for a second volume, or perhaps of a third.

A FRENCH periodical, the *Journal de l'Instruction Publique* contains a curious article by M. Oscar de Watteville, which announces the fact, not generally known, that in the lakes of Sweden there are vast layers or banks of iron, exclusively built up by animalcules, not unlike those that have laid the foundations of large islands in the ocean. The iron thus found is called in Sweden lake ore, distinguished, according to its form, into gunpowder, pearl, money, or cake-ore. These iron banks are from ten to

two hundred metres in length, from five to fifteen broad, and from a fourth to three-fourths of a metre and more in thickness.

A SPANISH journal announces that it has received the first two numbers of a clandestine journal published at Naples, and entitled "*Rome or Death*."

From The N. Y. Evening Post.
THE BATTLE AT HARPER'S FERRY AS
A WOMAN SAW IT.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 5, 1862.

THE memorable Sabbath of September 14, 1862, dawned above us at Harper's Ferry in superlative splendor. Sunshine, balm, and beauty suffused the august mountains and the blue ether which ensphered us, yet all was unheeded while we awaited the terrors of the day. We had lost the Heights. Cowardice or treason had caused the surrender of our only stronghold of defense. All night the enemy had been busy erecting his batteries on the hills of Maryland and the heights of Loudon. He held us on every side. There was no corner of safety for unarmed men, women, or children. They could do nothing but look up to the frowning mountain walls and await the storm of fire about to burst from their summits. Our batteries opened at daybreak, but it was two o'clock P.M. before the rebels fired a single gun. Our long-range ammunition was squandered on Sunday, firing hap-hazard, with uncertain aim after the enemy, doing him no positive damage.

On Monday morning, when his forty batteries were hailing death upon us, we had no ammunition!

With its engirdling heights in his possession, Jackson had truthfully named Harper's Ferry a "slaughter pen." We expected the bolts to descend upon our heads. We were ready for the worst. We wondered why he did not begin. As it *must* come, we were weary of waiting.

Through that long azure-golden morning I sat at my open window making bandages. Directly before me towered Loudon Mountain. Where the great trees had fallen on its summit, I knew that the enemy was at work ranging his batteries. Across the way the red flags of the hospitals were hoisted above their chimneys, streaming toward the foe, imploring mercy for the sick and wounded. The stony streets of Camp Hill throbbed with unwonted life. Soldiers were hurrying to and from the roadside spring with their black coffee-kettles, eager to get their day's supply of water before the bomb-shells thickened in the air.

Many strangers, refugees from Martinsburg and Winchester, paced up and down the street. Citizens at the corners discussed

the probabilities of the day with troubled faces. Young girls and matrons passed up the hospital path laden with baskets of delicacies, mindful of the suffering soldier amid all their fears. Poor contrabands stood talking in incoherent terror of "Jackson" and the certainty of their "being cotched and sold down South." In a high yard opposite little children were rolling on the grass, amid the late blooming flowers, utterly unconscious of the impending storm. All the air was pierced with the deep trill of insect melody. Myriad butterflies flickered by on flamelike wings. The thistle-down sailed on through seas of sunshine. The spider spun his web in the tree beside my window. The sonorous rhythm of the river rhymed with the mellifluous music of the air. Nature rested in deep content. The day, serene enough for Paradise, said: "Peace." God, through his benign heavens, said: "It is my Sabbath."

THE CANNONADE.

Whiz, whiz, whiz! Whir, whir, whir! Hiss, hiss, his—s! Bang, bang, bang! Roar, roar! Crash, smash! The rebel batteries opened upon us together. The windows rattled, the house shook to its foundations. Heaven and earth seemed collapsing. The roar rolling back to the mountains died amid the deeper roar bursting from their summits. One of our batteries on Camp Hill was directly in the rear of this house, behind the garden fence.

The rebel batteries on Loudon faced us. Thus this loyal little domicile was under the heaviest fire. I intended to finish eating a piece of pie dancing on a plate before me, but the shock of the tremendous cannon behind the house sent me off my chair in defiance of my aspiration after a sublime courage. I am not a hero; I very much wish to be one, but am not. It is exceedingly mortifying amid a stupendous occasion to find yourself unequal to its sublimity. With profound humility, O *Evening Post*, I confess, that to escape the earthquake above I went down into the cellar. I concluded, as a woman cannot command a battery, she should have the privilege of trying to save her head, though of no material use to any one but herself.

We all went into the cellar. On a box sat a matron. On an old willow basket a

fair young maiden. I entrenched myself in an empty piano box, my amusement being the frequent opportunity which I enjoyed of jumping out of it, as a shell hissed or struck near the outside wall. There sat gray-haired old men and a sick young man, the most frightened of all. Poor fellow, how he dodged about. Thus in all the cellars of the street above us cowered old age, innocent childhood, helpless womanhood.

I am afraid of bomb-shells. I am far more afraid of them than I was before I heard or felt their sulphurous current hissing very near my head. If there is a sound purely devilish this side of the region of the damned, it is the scream and shriek of a bomb-shell. No matter how thickly they tear the air, each fiend of a shell persists in a diabolical individuality of its own, and never hisses or screams precisely like any one of its myriad neighbors.

The cannonading continued terrific, unremitting. The bomb-shells poured into the garden beside us, struck the pavement before us, tore the earth up on the cellar door, threw the "sacred soil" into our up-stair windows, stunned us, but did not hit us. O futile rebel shells, what rare, restraining angel withheld your force and deadened your gunpowder beneath the very eaves of our lintel? Was it the talisman of a distant mother's prayers which held the spot charmed, holy, inviolable, beneath that hellish hail?

Two hours and a half in the cellar, and we grew so strangely accustomed to this unwonted thunder that we came up to shake under it in the sunlight. Faint, then nearer, nearer drew the thunder of battle beyond the hills. It is Sigel! He is coming to help us. Ah, if we can hold out two hours, Sigel, McClellan, some one will come to our rescue.

They know our condition at Washington, they must know it. They will never leave us to the disgrace of surrender. Thus we consoled and supported each other. Thus we watched and listened and prayed for the approaching saviour. Alas, he came not.

THE SECOND NIGHT OF THE FIGHT.

At dark the cannonading ceased, and the infantry fight began. The enemy tried to storm the breastworks, but was repulsed by our brave boys. It was night—no helper had come. From the moment in which

Maryland Heights were lost we knew that the disgraceful penalty would be surrender, unless reinforcements could save us from such a hapless fate. It was the night of the second day—no helper had come.

Then, under the sheltering stars, wrapped in protecting darkness, I watched nearly three thousand cavalry men ride swiftly away, resolved to cut their way through the enemy's lines, at every hazard, rather than remain to surrender their swords to traitors. It was the cry of all: "Let us cut our way through. Let us fight our way out. Do not keep us here to surrender!" But, no; the prayer of the gallant troops was of no avail. Yet, Col. Miles coolly said: "The enemy will open upon us at daylight with forty guns." He did. And I can say, from experience, that a mortal thumped out of the arms of Morpheus by the shock of forty batteries is in no danger of lapsing back into the delicious semi-dreams which make the elysium of early morning.

The cannonading of the Sabbath had been terrific. This of Monday morning was appalling. The enemy fired upon us from seven different directions, and our guns replied with great spirit and effect. Unequal, hopeless as was this fierce fight, the heroes at our guns never faltered.

I drew my curtain and looked out. The dense fogs above Maryland Heights were already splintered with the lances of the ascending sun. The Potomac was ablaze. Deep curtains of violet mist palpitated over the greenery of Loudon Mountain. The sulphurous smoke of cannonade enveloped its summit, spreading dense and dark above our heads, broken here and there by rifts of blue sky.

COLONEL MILES SURRENDERS.

Just then Col. Miles rode past. He was going to surrender, accompanied by his handsome young "aides" in glittering uniforms, followed by an imposing retinue of mounted "orderlies." He was going to surrender, mounted for the last time on the petted princely horse which had carried him through the campaigns of Mexico. He rode to the front of the battle line amid torrents of bursting shells, and saying to one of his aids: "I have done the best I could; I have done my duty," he waved a white pocket-handkerchief as a flag of truce. But the

cannonaders upon the hills were too eager with their fiendish firing to see through the heavy clouds of smoke the craven signal of surrender.

In vain he passed up and down the line waving the white flag; the storm of death seemed only to deepen.

It was half an hour later that, hearing its forerunning triumphal shriek, he bowed his head to save it, but the avenging shell would not be defrauded of retribution; its sole errand was death to him; it struck lower, the very artery of life, and he fell. His attached aide-de-camp, Mr. Binney, after trying vainly to stay the profuse bleeding of the wound, placed him in a blanket, and with great difficulty found one willing to help carry the fallen commander from the battlefield. This was a young officer of the 120th New York Regiment. Scarcely had he taken hold of the corner of the blanket when another bomb-shell, almost grazing the head of Col. Miles, struck the stomach of this young man and shivered him to atoms. The announcement of the surrender and the fall of Col. Miles passed along the ranks almost simultaneously.

It was then that the lion-hearted, heroic Capt. McGrath, of New York, who sent fire after fire from his battery into the enemy's ranks after he had been commanded to leave the Heights, and whose splendid shots and rash bravery was the enthusiastic admiration of all, being told that all was surrendered, threw up his arms, burst into tears, exclaiming, "Boys, we have no country." It was then, amid the resounding fire and the cries of the wounded and dying, that imprecations and curses broke from the ranks. "It is well that he is wounded; if he were here we would shoot him," was the cry of the outraged soldiers.

THE END.

I stood at the foot of the hill when they brought him back, groaning and bleeding in a blanket. The man who had passed my window, so proudly mounted, one hour before! It was a sight to inspire the profoundest pity. Whatever his errors or sins, in spite of the sorrow and disgrace that he had wrought us, it was a sad, sad sight, this fallen soldier, this bleeding, gray-haired man, so justly punished.

"He is shot in the leg. I wish to God that it had been through his head." "He is a traitor, and has met a traitor's fate." "If the rebels had not shot him, I would." "He is a d---d traitor and deserves to die." These are the utterances, deep and bitter, which passed through the crowd of soldiers and civilians within his very hearing. It was terrible to pass out of the world amid so many curses; thrice terrible if he was innocent of deliberate treason to his country.

That Col. Miles did his duty not even his friends assert. That he failed to do nearly all that a loyal and able commander should have done to have saved from the enemy this most important position no one can deny. The guns on Maryland Heights were not properly mounted for defence. Loudon Heights were left open to attack. The pontoon bridge was built and left for the enemy to pass over. Stores, ammunition, arms, were held intact, ready for Jackson to seize at his leisure, after he knew that he would seize them. If he had tried to make all things ready to welcome a friend instead of a foe, he could not have done so more effectually. However innocent in intention, the result to his country was only what it could have been had he been the basest traitor. Until the very hour of attack he swore that he "could hold the place against all hell; that he did not want reinforcements." Thus thirteen thousand men were trapped, disgraced, sacrificed.

The only key was turned, the only door opened through which the rebels could escape from Maryland, or Jackson rush from Virginia to reinforce Longstreet—the war prolonged—one more opportunity given to the insulting rebels of Richmond to chant the peans of another victory in the face of Europe—that the most ill-gotten, the most disgraceful victory of the war.

Yet with every incentive to an opposite course, what motive could have made Col. Miles a deliberate traitor? If he was not a traitor he was imbecile. A clouded brain, an overwhelming foe, perhaps, made him impotent to act; the opportunity which could have given him immortal glory lost, sent a brave soldier into a dishonored grave.

M. C. A.

To the Editor of The London Review.

SIR.—Mr. Glaisher's letter in your last Saturday's number is one of extraordinary interest, and announces a signal triumph over all previously recorded feats of aérostation, the height attained by him and his adventurous companion having exceeded by upwards of 5,000 feet the level of the highest summit of Chingopamari or Garishauka (the loftiest of the Himalayas, whose altitude is 29,002 feet), and surpassed the greatest height previously attained (those of M. Gay Lussac and Mr. Welsh) by one-half the amount of either; that is to say, if we accept as correct the indication of the minimum thermometer (*minus* 12° Fahr.) read off by Mr. Glaisher on his descent, and Mr. Coxwell's notice of the position of the aneroid index, as corresponding to a pressure of 8 inches. At any rate, Mr. Glaisher's last reading of the barometer may be taken as conclusive evidence of the attainment of an altitude of fully 30,000 feet, which is still 1,000 feet above the summit already mentioned.

While congratulating both these gentlemen on this narrow escape with their lives from so unheard-of a fate as that which awaited them had Mr. Coxwell's teeth been ever so little less tenacious, I must be allowed to demur to the conclusion that the height so attained is to be regarded as the limit of what man can ever expect to reach (or reach with safety), which seems to be Mr. Glaisher's opinion; and I would throw out the suggestion that were the aéronaut provided with a vessel containing a very moderate number of cubic feet of oxygen gas condensed under a pressure of four or five atmospheres, with the means of letting it out, in small quantities at a time, into a breathing-bag from which he might inhale the pure element at perfect ease, all danger of asphyxia would be avoided, and a very much greater altitude safely attained; while his strength might possibly be sustained by a supply of that wonderful stimulant, the Peruvian coca leaf. As the proportion of oxygen in ordinary atmospheric air is no more than one-fifth of the total volume, and as no inconvenience is experienced in breathing air of half the ordinary density, it is evident that a sufficiency of oxygen to sustain the full vital power would be thus obtained under a barometric pressure of 3 inches of

mercury, or one-tenth of that at the surface of the earth, which would correspond to a height of about 60,700 feet, or 11 1-2 miles, calculating on a decrement of temperature of 10° Fahr. per mile, and a temperature of 60° at the earth's surface. I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

J. F. W. HERSCHEL.

Collingwood, Sept. 17th, 1862.

COXWELL AND GLAISHER.

A SONG BY A SCHOOLBOY

'Tis of the youthful Icarus
The ancient poet sings,
For whom his daddy, Daedalus,
Made certain waxen wings;
But, flying up too near the sun,
His wings of wax did melt,
And then he came right down, like fun,
As hard as he could pelt.

A great deal faster than he rose
Apace descended he,
Until he ended all his woes
In the Ægean Sea.
Now what a lie is that account!
About the hour of noon
Glaisher and Coxwell bold did mount
Six miles in a balloon.

No mortal man could soar so high,
Because, at that great height,
A pigeon they let out to fly,
Could not effect its flight.
Half stifled for the want of breath
Was Coxwell, Glaisher too:
Glaisher was nearly froze to death,
And Coxwell's hands turned blue.

Aloft 'tis cold instead of hot;
Wax wings would freeze, not run,
By which a chap as near had got
As could be, to the sun;
As snow upon a mountain's top
Might show to every fool:
So that slow fable you must drop
That we are taught at school.

But Glaisher's pluck, and Coxwell's too,
Is something to admire;
As high as eagle ever flew
Those fellows went, and higher.
One kept on reading at his glass,
Whilst he could see or stand;
The other's teeth let out the gas,
When cold had numbed his hand.

'Tis true that these two men did go
Six miles towards the sky;
But as for Icarus, we know
That story's all my eye.
Then what's the use to read about
Old heroes' fabled acts,
When now they're beaten out and out,
By wonders that are facts?

—Punch.

THE STORY OF AN OAK-TREE.

On Croton's plains, where Grecian youths
In silence learned immortal truths,
And wise Pythagoras taught the schools :
That Freedom reigns where Justice rules :

On Croton's plains, in days of old,
Stout Milo roved—a wrestler bold ;
Whose brawny arm, as legends tell,
With one good blow an ox could fell.

And when this Milo dined, we read,
An ox would scarce his hunger feed :
So strong was he, so wide of maw,
His like, I think, the world ne'er saw.

In stalwart pride he strode the plains,
A tyrant grim o'er kine and swains ;
And swung, beneath Crotona's oaks,
A woodman's axe with giant strokes ;

And day by day his wedges drove
Until the goodliest oak he clove—
A lofty tree, whose branches spanned
The broad, fair fields with foliage grand ;

With foliage green, like sheltering wings,
O'er flowers and fruits and breathing things :
O'er swarming bees and nestling birds,
And laboring men, with flocks and herds.

The stars were clustered round its crest,
And sunbeams striped its blooming breast ;
And under it—as well might be—
Pythagoras taught how souls were free !

But Milo, mustering strength perverse,
His wedges drove with scowl and curse,
Till, rending through the oak-tree's side,
They clove its trunk with fissures wide ;

And, yielding round those wedges black,
The huge tree quaked with thunderous crack,
Until, beneath their widening strain,
Its heart of oak seemed riven in twain.

Then Milo in his madness spoke :
“I think my strength can tear this oak !
These wedges I no more need drive—
My hands alone the trunks shall rive !”

With giant gripe, the oak to rend,
He bowed himself, as whirlwinds bend—
With furious tug and desperate strain,
To rive that goodly oak in twain :

Till, one by one, with loosening clang,
His iron wedges outward sprang ;
And, narrowing its elastic strands,
The tough oak closed on Milo's hands.

It crushed him in its fierce rebound ;
It shook each black wedge to the ground ;
It lifted up its crest of stars,
And bade the sunbeams gild its scars !

I know not if Pythagoras spoke
To freeborn souls of Milo's oak :
But this I know, that, if there towers
Such oak-tree in this land of ours—

And if some impious hand should strain
To rend that goodly oak in twain—
Methinks I'd cry aloud this day,
“In God's name, strike the wedge away !”

The wedge, that rent the strands apart—
The wedge, that fain would cleave the heart ;
Strike out this wedge ! and God will close
The Union oak on Union's foes !

A. J. H. DUGANNE.

—N. Y. Evening Post.

THOUGHTS.

The following lines, original in conception, though somewhat careless in composition, are extracted from a volume lately published by a lady in England, who withholds her name, though she need not be ashamed to append it to such a production :—

THEY come when the sunlight
Is bright on the mountain ;
They come when the moonshine
Is white on the fountain ;
At morn and at even,
By minutes and hours,
But not as they once were,
Of birds and of flowers.

They come when some token
Of past days will rise,
As a link to the present,
And then they bring sighs ;
They come when some dreaming,
Through hopes and through fears,
Rushes on to the future,
And then they bring tears.

They come when the sea-mist
O'er ocean is rise,
And they tell of a shadow
That hangs over life ;
They come when the storm
In thunder and gloom
Spreads around, and they speak
Of the earth and the tomb.

They come when the ripple
Is low on the lake,
And the plover is nestling
By fountain or brake ;
And the twilight looks out
With a star on its breast,
And they whisper that all
But themselves are at rest.

They come when the low breeze
Is fanning the leaves ;
They come when the flower-cup
The dewdrop receives ;
By night's noon tide silence,
By day's noon tide hum,
And at times, oh ! how deeply
And darkly they come.

THE WISHING WHISTLE.

"You have heard," said a youth to his sweet-heart who stood,
While he sat on a corn-sheaf, at daylight's decline,

"You have heard of the Danish boy's whistle of wood—
I wish that the Danish boy's whistle were mine!"

"And what would you do with it? Tell me!" she said,
While an arch smile played round her beautiful face;
"I would blow it," he answered, "and then my fair maid
Would fly to my side, and would here take her place."

"Is that all you wish it for? That may be yours.

Without any magic," the fair maiden cried; "A favor so slight one's good-nature secures!" And she playfully seated herself by his side.

"I would blow it again," said the youth, "and the charm Would work so, that not even Modesty's cheek

Would be able to keep from my neck your fine arm!"

She smiled, and she laid her fine arm round his neck.

"Yet once more would I blow, and the music divine
Would bring me, the third time, an exquisite bliss—

You would lay your fair cheek to this brown one of mine,
And your lips, stealing past it, would give me a kiss."

The maiden laughed out in her innocent glee—"What a fool of yourself with the whistle you'd make!"

For only consider, how silly 'twould be
To sit there and whistle for—what you might take!"

—*The Lyrical and other minor Poems of Robert Story.*

ST. SEBASTIAN.

THE Atlantic rolls around a fort of Spain.

Old towers, bastion boomerin' o'er the sea,
The yellow banner, floating, torn, yet free,
Cannon and shell, the trumpet's martial strain,
Bring memories of her greatness back in vain;
The shadow of the past is over thee,
Grand monument of Roland's chivalry.
And glories that can never come again—
Balconied streets, the scenes of stubborn fight
In the red days of siege, and terraced squares,
And bright eyes gleaming through the veil of night,

And feet that climb the long cathedral stairs
So softly, every sight and sound recall
Spain's worn-out flag above the ruined wall.

—*Spectator.* J. N.

MONT BLANC.

LOVE has her home in valleys, weaves her spells
Of Peace among the hamlets of the plain;
Cities are rife with human loss and gain;
Breathing the air of forests Freedom dwells;
Shifting like life the ocean foams and swells;

Thou art above the reach of joy and pain,
Poets have faltered forth thy praise in vain;
For nothing hero of what is mortal tells.

The silence of the everlasting snows
Is thine, the starlight on thy great white throne;

Avalanche and glacier break not thy repose;
Morning and evening find thee all alone;
Thou highest tribute to the Highest given,
Where Earth aspires to be the peer of Heaven.

—*Spectator.* J. N.

GENEVA.

HERE, centuries ago, Geneva rose,
Cradled in storms—until the iron will
Of her great preacher bade the waves be still
Cold Protestant, the stream of passion flows

More calmly in thy haven of repose;
Even in thy welcome there is something chill,

As if the glaciers of the far white hill
Crept round thee with the shadow of its snows.

Refuge of exiles—he who made thee so
Moved in a narrow path, yet mounted high.

Rock-rooted on his creed, he learnt to know
Nothing of Nature's magnanimity.

His swordlike spirit, darting keenly, made
His name immortal and the world afraid.

—*Spectator.* A.

TRUST AND REST.

FRET not, poor soul; while doubt and fear
Disturb thy breast,
The pitying angels, who can see
How vain thy wild regret must be,
Say, Trust and rest.

Plan not, nor scheme—but calmly wait;
His choice is best.
While blind and erring is thy sight,
His wisdom sees and judges right,
So trust and rest.

Strive not, nor struggle, thy poor might
Can never wrest
The meanest thing to serve thy will;
All power is His alone, be still,
And trust and rest.

Desire not; self-love is strong
Within thy breast;
And yet He loves thee better still,
So let Him do His loving will,
And trust and rest.

What dost thou fear? His wisdom reigns
Supreme confessed;
His power is infinite; His love
Thy deepest, fondest dreams above—
So trust and rest.